Alchemical Texts

16th Century and earlier

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The words of Father Aristeus to his son

My son, after having imparted to thee a knowledge of all things, and after having taught thee how to live, after what manner to regulate thy conduct by the maxims of a most excellent wisdom, and after having also enlightened thee in that which concerns the order and the nature of the monarchy of the universe, it only remains for me to communicate those Keys of Nature which hitherto I have so carefully held back.

Among all these Keys, that which is most closely allied to the highest spirits of the universe deserves to take the first rank, and there is no one who questions that it is very specially endowed with an altogether divine property. When one is in possession of this Key, the rich become miserable in our eyes, inasmuch as there is no treasure which can possibly be compared to it. In effect, what is the use of wealth, when one is liable to be afflicted with human infirmities? Where is the advantage of treasures, when death is about to destroy us? There is no earthly abundance which we are not bound to abandon upon the threshold of the tomb. But it is no longer thus when I am possessed of this Key, for then I behold death from afar, and I am convinced that I have within my hands a secret which extinguishes all fear of misfortunes in this life. Wealth is ever at my command, and I no longer want for treasures; weakness flees away from me; and I can ward off the approach of the destroyer while I own this Golden Key of the Grand Work.

My son, it is of this Key that I propose to make thee the inheritor; but I conjure thee, by the name of God, and by the Holy Place wherein He dwelleth, to lock it up in the cabinet of thy heart, under the seal of silence. If thou knowest how to make use of it, it will overwhelm thee with good things, and when thou shalt be old or ill, it will rejuvenate, console, and cure thee; for it has the special virtue of curing all diseases, of transfigurating metals, and of making happy those who possess it. It is that Key to which our fathers have often exhorted us under the bond of an inviolable oath. Learn, then, to know it, cease not to do good to the poor, to the widow, to the orphan, and learn its seal of me, and its true character.

Know that all beings which are under heaven, each after its own kind, derives origin from the same principle, and it is, as a fact, unto Air that all owe their birth as to a common principle. The nourishment of each existence makes evident the nature of its principle, for that which sustains the life is that which gives the being. The fish joys in the water; the child sucks from its mother. The tree no longer bears fruit when its trunk is deprived of humidity. It is by the life that we discern the principle of things; the life of things is the Air, and by consequence Air is their principle. It is for this reason that Air corrupts all things, and even as it gives life, so also it takes it away. Wood, iron, stones, are consumed by fire, and fire cannot subsist but by Air. Now, that which is the cause of corruption is also the cause of generation. When, by reason of divers corruptions, it comes to pass that creatures fall sick and do suffer, either through length of days or by mischance, the Air coming to their succour cures them, whether they be imperfect or languishing. The earth, the tree, the herb languish under the heat of excessive drought; but all things are recuperated by the dew of the Air. But, nevertheless, as

no creature can be restored and re-established except by its own nature, Air being the fountain and original source of all things, it is in like manner the universal source. It is manifestly certain that the seed, the death, the sickness, and the remedy of all things are all alike in the Air. There has Nature stored up all her treasures, establishing therein the principles of the generation and corruption of all things, and concealing them as behind special and secret doors. To know how to open these doors with sufficient facility so as to draw upon the radical Air of the Air, is to possess in truth the golden Keys, and to be in ignorance thereof precludes all possibility of acquiring that which cures all maladies and recreates or preserves the life of men.

If thou desirest then, O my Son, to chase away all thine infirmities, thou must seek the means in the primal and universal source. Nature produces like from like alone, and that only which is in correspondence or conformity with Nature can effect good to her. Learn then, my Son, to make use of Air, learn to conserve the Key of Nature. It is truly a secret which transcends the possibilities of the vulgar man, but not those of the sage, this knowledge of the Extraction of Air, the Celestial Aerial Substance, from Air; for Air may be familiar to all beings, but he who would truly avail himself thereof must possess the secret Key of Nature.

It is a great secret to understand the virtue which Nature has imprinted in substances. For natures are attracted by their like; a fish is attracted by a fish - a bird by a bird - and air by another air, as with a gentle allurement. Snow and ice are an air that has been congealed by cold; Nature has endowed them with the qualities which are requisite to attract air.

Place thou, therefore, one of these two things in an earthen or metallic vessel, well closed, well sealed, and take thou the Air which congeals round this vessel when it is warm. Receive that which is distilled in a deep vessel with a narrow neck, neat and strong, so that thou canst use it at thy pleasure, and adapt to the rays of the Sun and Moon - that is, Silver and Gold. When thou hast filled a vessel cork it well, so that the heavenly scintillation concentrated therein shall not escape into the air. Fill as many vases as thou wilt with liquid; then hearken to thy next task, and keep silent. Build a furnace, place a small vessel therein, half full of the Liquid Air which thou hast collected ; seal and lute the said vessel effectually. Light thy fire in such a manner that the thinner portion of the smoke may rise frequently above. Thus shall Nature perform that which is continually accomplished by the central fire in the bowels of the earth, where it agitates the vapours of the air by an unceasing circulation. The fire must be light, mild, and moist, like that of a hen brooding over her eggs, and it must be sustained in such a manner that it will cook without burning the aerial fruits, which, having been for a long time agitated by a movement, shall rest at the bottom of the vessel in a state of perfect coction.

Add next unto this Cocted Air a fresh air, not in great quantity, but as much as may be necessary; that is to say, a little less than on the first occasion. Continue this process until there shall be no more than half a bowl of Liquid Air uncooked. Proceed in such wise that the cooked portion shall gently liquefy by fermentation in a warm dunghill, and shall in like manner blacken, harden, amalgamate, become fixed, and grow red. Finally, the pure part being separated from the impure by means of a legitimate fire, and by a wholly divine

artifice, thou shalt take one part of pure crude Air and one part of pure hardened Air, taking care that the whole is dissolved and united together till it becomes moderately black, more white, and finally perfectly red. Here is the end of the work, and then hast thou composed that elixir which produces all the wonders that our Sages aforetime have with reason held so precious; and thou dost possess in this wise the Golden Key of the most inestimable secret of Nature - the true Potable Gold and the Universal Medicine. I bequeathe unto thee a small sample, the quality and virtues of which are attested by the perfect health which I enjoy, being aged over one hundred and eight years.

Do thou work, and thou shalt achieve as I have done. So be it in the name and by the power of the great Architect of the Aniverse. Such skilful artists of the Great Work as have pondered deeply on the principles confided to the son of Aristeus, have concluded that it would be no vain operation to make an Amalgam with the veritable Balm of Mercury, and this is the way in which they claim to produce this Balm :-
Take one pound of the best Mercury that can be obtained; purge it three times through a skin, and once by calcined Montpellier Tartar. Place it in a glass horn, which shall be strong enough to resist a fierce heat. With it combine Vitriol, Salt of Nitre, Rock Alum, and eight ounces of good Spirit of Wine. Having hermetically sealed the horn, so that nothing can evaporate, place it for digestion in a warm dung-hill during a space of fifteen days. At the end of this time the composition will be transformed into a phlegmatic grease; it must then be exposed to a sand fire, and the fire must be raised gradually to an extreme point, till a white, milky humour exudes from the substance and falls into the recipient. Let it then be replaced in the horn to be rectified, and for the consumption of the phlegm. This second distillation will cause a sweet, white oil to exude; this oil will be devoid of corrosive qualities; it will surpass all other metallic oils in excellence; and there is no doubt that, combined with the Elixir of Aristeus, it will be possible to perform such marvels as might be expected from so admirable an experiment.

Simon Forman - Of the Division of Chaos

Into darkness then did descend the spirit of God,
Upon the watery chaos, whereon he made his abode.
Which darkness then was on the face of the deep,
In which rested the Chaos, and in it all things asleep.
Rude, unformed, without shape, form or any good,
Out of which God created all things as it stood.
But first he commanded a light to appear,
That all might be seen, that before was hid.
And God saw that the light was good and clear,
And the darkness and light he did then divide,
Calling the one day, and the other night,
For darkness [to] obscure (and day for shining bright).
And a firmament then God did let make,

To sever the waters above from those below;
And divided the Earth from the waters also,
Wherein greatly his power he did show.
Then out of this Chaos, the four elements were made:
Heat and cold, moist and dry, in like wise,
Which are the beginning of all creatures wide,
That under the globe of Luna do abide.
The quintessence (that some men it call)
Was taken out of the Chaos before the four elements all:
Which is the first being, as we may descry,
And uncorruptible, whereof was made the sky,
And celestial bodies all, which do never die.

So that of Hyle, nor Chaos, nor quintessence high,
Is there any generation to multiply,
In species or kinde here in Earth below,
Of creatures abiding under the sky,
But the four elements do make influence,
By their special power into all things below;
And into every specific thing do put quintessence,
To reap such seed thereof: as men do sow,
But of themselves. As they are simple and pure in kind,
In every species together conjoined we do them find,
Creating Sulphur, Salt, and Argent vive -
The inward bodies of things that make them thrive.
Whose gross bodies to destroy, if we them have,
We must not spare thereof to deprave.

Next after this, four elements pure, simple and clear,
That is, hot and cold, moist and also dry,
Are assigned to work on four bodies gross,
The last substance of the Chaos, and of the highest the dross.
Earth, water, air and fire, therein to show their might,
And therein to make generation and bring forms to light;
In every one severally, out creatures to bring,
Which is the beginning and generation of all things.
For heat is assigned to the fire, which doth burn;
Moisture to the air, which doth corrupt and round turn;
Dryness to the earth, the mother of each thing;
And coldness to the water, from whence all do spring.
Heat and moisture are active to generation;
Cold and dryness are passive, in and to each thing;
Fire and air, active by elementation;
Water and earth, passive to generation.

For in dryness of the earth and in water clear.
All things are engendered, before they appear.
According the the conjunction of the four elements,
In each of their subjects severally,
Are engendered and brought forth every creature,
Living or being under the Moon's sky.
The earth is fixed, durable for ever to abide;
The air continually moveth from place to place beside,
And is the life of the fire which purges all;
And the water (for coldness) destructive, men call.
But when they are commixed, one with another,
Not simple, but compound in their elemental qualities,
Then work they in kind by diversities,
More or less as they are commixed by degrees.

If these four elements do work in the fire,
To engender and bring forth some creature,
As the Salamander, ever living therein,
You must conceive well of his commixtion,
Which is by Nature and elements tempered so well,
That he delights as gold in the fire to dwell.
For to the creatures of the fire and his region,
The fire is always most natural.
For that in their commixture it is most predominate,
Which maketh them the more able the fire to endure,
By reason of much heat and dryness in their temperature.
The water to the fire is most enemy.
Therefore, keep fire in water, and moisten that which is dry,
And it will perish and die, and soon putrefy.
For as the fire is hot of himself, and of the earth dry,
So the water is cold and moist of the sky,
Which causes creatures of the fire to die and putrefy.
For cold doth destroy and moist doth putrefy,
Except you know this, study not philosophy.

Likewise, the creatures that in the air do live,
Of the airy substance are most compact.
The other elements which do under drive,
As water, earth and fire, of which they are facte (made).
Yet in the air they most delight, and of it do feed,
And in their contrary full ill do they speed.
For it is omne oppositum under the sky,
Which is the only cause all creatures do die.
For in their simile all things do rejoice,

And of their simile they all ways make choice.

And creatures engendered in the waters cold and moist,
Are sluggish and heavy, are given to much rest,
And feed of such things as that Element doth hold.
For their bodies are gross and of a moist mould,
As fishes, frogs and herbs: milk, butter and cheese,
To feed so grossly, they are nothing greasy.

An Alchemical Mass

Introitus. Our Lord, fount of goodness, inspirer of the sacred art, from whom all good things come to your faithful, have mercy.

Christe. Christ, Holy one, blessed stone of the art of the science who for the salvation of the world hast inspired the light of the science, for the extirpation of the unbelievers, have mercy.

Kyrie. Our Lord, divine fire, help our hearts, that we may be able, to your praise, to expand the sacraments of the art, have mercy.

Graduale. He descends like rain upon the fleece, and as showers falling gently upon the earth. Allelujah. O blessed creator of the earth, whiter than snow, sweeter than sweetness, fragrant at the bottom of the vessel like balsam. O salutary medicine for men, that cureth every weakness of the body: O sublime fount whence gushes forth truly the true water of life into the garden of thy faithful.

Ave Maria. Hail beautiful lamp of heaven, shining light of the world! Here art thou united with the moon, here is made the band of Mars and the conjunction of Mercury. From these three is born through through the magistery of the art, in the river bed, the strong giant whom a thousand times a thousand seek, when these three shall have dissolved, not into rain water... but into mercurial water, into this our blessed gum which dissolves of itself and is named the Sperm of the Philosophers. Now he makes haste to bind and betroth himself to the virgin bride, and to get her with child in the bath over a moderate fire. But the Virgin will not become pregnant at once unless she be kissed in repeated embraces. Then she conceives in her body, and thus is begotten the child of good omen, in accordance with the order of nature. Then will appear in the bottom of the vessel the mighty Ethiopian, burned, calcined, discoloured, altogether dead and lifeless. He asks to be buried, to be sprinkled with his own moisture and slowly calcined till he shall arise in glowing form from the fierce fire... Behold a wondrous restoration and renewal of the Ethiopian! Because of the bath of rebirth he takes a new name, which the philosophers call the natural sulphur and their son, this being the stone of the philosophers. And behold it is one thing, one root, one essence with nothing extraneous added and from which much that was superfluous is taken away by the magistery of the art... It is the treasure of treasures, the supreme philosophical potion, the divine secret of the

ancients. Blessed is he that finds such thing. One that has seen this thing writes and speaks openly, and I know that his testimony is true. Praise be to God for evermore.

The Golden Tractate of Hermes Trismegistus

SECTION I

Even thus saith Hermes: Through long years I have not ceased to experiment, neither have I have spared any labour of mind And this science and art I have obtained by the sole inspiration of the living God, who judged fit to open them to me His servant, who has given to rational creatures the power of thinking and judging aright, forsaking none, or giving to any occasion to despair. For myself, I had never discovered this matter to anyone had it not been from fear of the day of judgment, and the perdition of my soul if I concealed it. It is a debt which I am desirous to discharge to the Faithful, as the Father of the faithful did liberally bestow it upon me.

Understand ye, then, 0 Sons Of Wisdom, that the knowledge of the four elements Or the ancient philosophers was not corporally or imprudently sought after, which are through patience to be discovered, according to their causes and their occult operation. But, their operation is occult, since nothing is done except the matter be decompounded, and because it is not perfected unless the colours be thoroughly passed and accomplished. Know then, that the division that was made upon the water by the ancient philosophers separates it into four substances; one into two, and three into one; the third part of which is colour, as it were-a coagulated moisture; but the second and third waters are the Weights of the Wise.

Take of the humidity, or moisture, an ounce and a half, and or the Southern redness, which is the soul of gold, a fourth part, that is to say, half-an-ounce of the citrine Seyre, in like manner, half-an-ounce of the Auripigment, half-an-ounce, which are eight; that is three ounces. And know ye that the vine of the wise is drawn forth in three, but the wine thereof is not perfected, until at length thirty be accomplished

Understand the operation, therefore. Decoction lessens the matter, but the tincture augments it; because Luna in fifteen days is diminished; and in the third she is augmented. This is the beginning and the end. Behold, I have declared that which was hidden, since the work is both with thee and about thee - that which was within is taken out and fixed, and thou canst have it either in earth or sea.

Keep, therefore, thy Argent vive, which is prepared in the innermost chamber in which it is coagulated; for that is the Mercury which is separated from the residual earth.

He, therefore, who now hears my words, let him search into them; which are to justify no evil-doer, but to benefit the good; therefore, I have discovered all things that were before hidden concerning this knowledge, and disclosed the greatest of all secrets, even the Intellectual Science.

Know ye, therefore, Children of Wisdom, who enquire concerning the report thereof, that the vulture standing upon the mountain crieth out with a loud voice, I am the White of the Black, and the Red of the White, and the Citrine of the Red, and behold I speak the very truth.

And know that the chief principle of the art is the Crow, which is the blackness of the night

and clearness of the day, and flies without wings. From the bitterness existing in the throat the tincture is taken, the red goes forth from his body, and from his back is taken a thin water. Understand, therefore, and accept this gift of God which is hidden from the thoughtless world. In the caverns of the metals there is hidden the stone that is venerable, splendid in colour, a mind sublime, and an open sea. Behold, I have declared it unto thee; give thanks to God, who teacheth thee this knowledge, for He in return recompenses the grateful.

Put the matter into a moist fire, therefore, and cause it to boil in order that its heat may be augmented, which destroys the siccity of the incombustible nature, until the radix shall appear; then extract the redness and the light parts, till only about a third remains

Sons of Science ! For this reason are philosophers said to be envious, not that they grudged the truth to religious or just men, or to the wise; but to fools, ignorant and vicious, who are *without self-control* and benevolence, least they should be made powerful and able to perpetrate sinful things. For of such the philosophers are made accountable to God, and evil men are not admitted worthy of this wisdom.

Know that this matter I call the stone; but it is also named the feminine of magnesia or the hen, or the white spittle, or the volatile milk, the incombustible oil in order that it may be hidden from the inept and ignorant who are deficient in goodness and self-control; which I have nevertheless signified to the wise by one *only* epithet, viz., the Philosopher's Stone.

Include, therefore, and conserve in this sea, the fire and the heavenly bird, to the latest moment of his exit. But I deprecate ye all, Sons of Philosophy, on whom the great gift of this knowledge being bestowed, if any should undervalue or divulge the power thereof to the ignorant, or such as are unfit for the knowledge of this secret. Behold, I have received nothing from any to whom I have not returned that which had been given me, nor have I failed to honour him; even in this I have reposed the highest confidence.

This, O Son, is the concealed stone of many colours, which is born and brought forth in one colour; know this and conceal it. By this, the Almighty favouring, the greatest diseases are escaped, and every sorrow, distress, and evil and hurtful thing is made to depart; for it leads from darkness into light, from this desert wilderness to a secure habitation, and from poverty and straits to a free and ample fortune.

SECTION II.

MY SON, before all things I admonish thee to fear God, in whom is the strength of thy undertaking, and the bond of whatsoever thou meditatest to unloose; whatsoever thou hearest, consider it rationally. For I hold thee not to be a fool. Lay hold, therefore, of my instructions and meditate upon them, and so let thy heart be fitted also to conceive, as if thou wast thyself the author of that which I now teach. If thou appliest cold to any nature that is hot, it will not hurt it; in like manner, he who is rational shuts himself within from the threshold of ignorance; lest supinely he should be deceived.

Take the flying bird and drown it flying and divide and separate it from its pollutions, which yet hold it in death; draw it forth, and repel it from itself, that it may live and answer thee; not by flying away into the regions above but by truly forbearing to fly. For if thou shalt deliver it out of its prison, after this thou shalt govern it according to Reason. and according to the days that I shall teach thee; then will it become a companion up to thee, and by it thou wilt become

to be an honoured lord.
Extract from the racy its shadow, and from the light its obscurity, by which the clouds hang over it and keep away the light; by means of its construction, also, and fiery redness, it is burned
Take, my Son, this redness, corrupted with the water, which is as a live coal holding the fire, which if thou shalt withdraw so often until the redness is made pure, then it will associate with thee, by whom it was cherished, and in whom it rests.
Return, then, O my Son, the coal being extinct in life, upon the water for thirty days, as I shall note to thee - and henceforth thou art a crowned king, resting over the fountain and drawing from thence the Auripigment dry without moisture. And now I have made the heart of the hearers, hoping in thee, to rejoice even in their eyes, beholding thee in anticipation of that which thou possessest.
Observe, then, that the water was first in the air, then in the earth; restore thou it also to the superiors by its proper windings, and not foolishly altering it; then to the former spirit, fathered in its redness, let it be carefully conjoined.
Know, my Son, that the fatness of our earth is sulphur, the auripigment sirety, and colcothar, which are also sulphur, of which auripigments, sulphur, and such like, some are more vile than others, in which there is a diversity, of which kind also) is the fat of gluey matters, such as are hair, nails, hoofs, and sulphur itself, and of the brain, which too is auripigment; of the like kind also are the lions' and cats' claws, which is sirety; the fat of white bodies, and the fat *of* the two oriental quicksilvers, which sulphurs are hunted and retained by the bodies.
I say, moreover, that this sulphur doth tinge and fix, and is held by the conjunction of the tinctures; oils also tinge, but fly away, which in the body are contained, which is a conjunction of fugitives only with sulphurs and albumninous bodies, which hold also and detain the fugitive ens.
The disposition sought after by the philosophers, O Son, is but one in our egg; but this, in the hen's egg, is much less to be found. But lest so much of the Divine Wisdom as is in a hen's egg should not be distinguished, our composition is, as that is, from the four elements Adapted and composed. Know, therefore, that in the hen's egg is the greatest help with respect to the proximity and relationship of the matter in nature, for in it there is a spirituality and conjunction of elements, and an earth which is golden in its tincture. But the Son, enquiring or Hermes, saith, The sulphurs which are fit for our work, whether are they celestial or terrestrial ? To whom the Father answers, Certain of them are heavenly, and some are of the earth.
Then the Son saith, Father, I imagine the heart in the superiors to be heaven, and in the inferiors earth. But saith Hermes, It is not so; the masculine truly is the Heaven of the feminine, and the feminine is the earth of the masculine.
The Son then asks, Father, which of these is more worthy than the other; whether is it the heaven or the earth? Hermes replies, Both need the help one of the other; for the precepts demand a medium. But, saith the Son, if thou shalt say that a wise man governs all mankind? But ordinary men, replies Hermes, are better for them, because every nature delights in society of its own kind, and so we find it to be in the life of Wisdom where equals are conjoined. But what, rejoins the Son, is the mean betwixt them ? To whom Hermes replies, In everything In nature there are three from two: the beginning, the middle, and the end. First

the needful water, then the oily tincture, and lastly, the faeces, or earth, which remains below But the Dragon inhabits in all these, and his houses are the darkness and blackness that is in them and by them he ascends into the air, from his rising, which is their heaven. But whilst the fume remains in them, they are not immortal. Take away, therefore, the vapour from the water, and the blackness from the oily tincture, and death from the faeces; and by dissolution thou shalt possess a triumphant reward, even that in and by which the possessors live.

Know then, my Son, that the temperate unguent, which is fire, is the medium between the faeces and the water and is the Perscrutinator of the water. For the unguents are called sulphurs, because between fire and oil and this sulphur there is such a chose proximity, that even as fire burns so does the sulphur also.

All the sciences of the world, O Son are comprehended in this my hidden Wisdom; and this, and the learning of the Art, consists in these wonderful hidden elements which it doth discover and complete. It behoves him, therefore, who would be introduced to this hidden Wisdom, to free himself from the hidden usurpations of vice; and to be just, and good, and of a sound reason, ready at hand to help mankind, of a serene countenance, diligent to save, and be himself a patient guardian of the arcane secrets of philosophy.

And this know that except thou understandest how to mortify and induce generation, to vivify the Spirit, and introduce Light, until they fight with each other and grow white and freed from their defilements, rising as it were from blackness and darkness, thou knowest nothing nor canst perform anything; but if thou knowest this, thou wilt be of a great dignity so that even kings themselves shall reverence thee. These secrets, Son, it behoves thee to conceal from the vulgar and profane world.

Understand, also, that our Stone is from many things, and of various colours, and composed from four elements which we ought to divide and dissever in pieces, and segregate, in the veins, and partly mortifying the same by its proper nature, which is also in it, to preserve the water and fire dwelling therein, which is from the four elements and their waters, which contain its water; this, however, is not water in its true form, but fire, containing in a pure vessel the ascending waters, lest the espirits should fly away from the bodies; for by this means they are made tinging and fixed.

O, blessed watery form, that dissolvest the elements: Now it behoves us, with this watery soul, to possess ourselves of a sulphurous form, and to mingle the same with our Acetum. For when, by the power of the water, the composition is dissolved, it is the key of the restoration; then darkness and death fly away from them, and Wisdom proceeds onwards to the fulfillment of her Law.

SECTION III.

Know my Son, that the philosophers bind up their matter with a strong chain, that it may contend with the Fire; because the spirits in the washed bodies desire to dwell therein and to rejoice. In these habitations they verify themselves and inhabit there, and the bodies hold them, nor can they be thereafter separated any more.

The dead elements are revived, the composed bodies tinge and are altered, and by a wonderful process they are made permanent, as saith the philosopher.

O, permanent watery Form, creatrix of the royal elements; who, having with thy brethren and

a just government obtained the tincture, findest rest. Our most precious stone is cast forth upon the dunghill, and that which is most worthy is made vilest of the vile. Therefore, it behoves us to mortify two Argent vives together, both to venerate and be venerated, viz., the Argent vive of Auripigment, and the oriental Argent vive of Magnesia

O, Nature, the most potent creatrix of Nature, which containest and separatest natures in a middle principle. The Stone comes with light, and with light it is generated, and then it generates and brings forth the black clouds or darkness, which is the mother of all things. But when we marry the crowned King to our red daughter, and in a gentle fire, not hurtful, she doth conceive an excellent and supernatural son, which permanent life she doth also feed with a subtle heat, so that he lives at length in our fire.

But when thou shalt send forth thy fire upon the foliated sulphur, the boundary of hearts doth enter in above, it is washed in the same, and the purified matter thereof is extracted.

Then is he transformed, and his tincture by help of the fire remains red, as it were flesh. But our Son, the king begotten, takes his tincture from the fire, and death even, and darkness, and the waters flee away.

The Dragon shuns the sunbeams which dart through the crevices, and our dead son lives; king comes forth from the fire and rejoins with his spouse, the occult treasures are laid open, and the virgin's milk is whitened. The Son, already vivified is become a warrior in the fire and of tincture super-excellent. For this Son is himself the treasury, even himself bearing the Philosophic Matter.

Approach, ye Sons of Wisdom, and rejoice; let us now rejoice together, for the reign of death is finished, and the Son doth rule. And now he is invested with the red garment, and the scarlet colour is put on.

SECTION IV.

Understand, then, O Son of Wisdom, what the Stone declares; Protect me, and I will protect thee; increase my strength that I may help thee ! My Sol and my beams are most inward and secretly in me my own Luna, also, my light, exceeding every light, and my good things are better than all other good things. I give freely, and reward the intelligent with joy and gladness, glory, riches, and delights; and them that seek after me I make to know and understand, and to possess divine things. Behold, that which the philosophers has concealed is written with seven letters; for Alpha and Yda follow two; and Sol, in like manner, follows the book; nevertheless, if thou art willing that he should have Dominion, observe the Art, and join the son to the daughter of the water, which, Jupiter and a hidden secret.

Auditor, understand, let us use our Reason; consider all with the most accurate investigation, which in the contemplative part I have demonstrated to thee, the whole matter I know to be the one only thing. But who is he that understands the true investigation and enquires rationally into this matter? It is not from man, nor from anything like him or akin to him, nor from the ox or bullock, and if any creature conjoins with one of another species, that which is brought forth is neutral from either.

Thus saith Venus: I beget light, nor is the darkness of my nature, and if my metal be not dried all bodies desire me, for I liquefy them and wipe away their rust, even I extract their substance. Nothing therefore is better or more venerable than I, my brother also being

conjoined.
But the King, the ruler, to his brethren, testifying of him, saith: I am crowned, and I am adorned with a royal diadem: I am clothed with the royal garment, and I bring Joy and gladness of heart; for being chained, I caused my substance to lay hold of, and to rest within the arms and breast of my mother, and to fasten upon her substance; making that which was invisible to become visible, and the occult matter to appear. And everything which the philosophers have hidden is generated by us. Hear, then, these words, and understand them; keep them, and meditate thereon, and seek for nothing more. Man in the beginning is generated of nature, whose inward substance is fleshy, and not from anything else. Meditate on these plain things, and reject what is superfluous.
Thus saith the philosopher: Botri is made from the citrine which is extracted out of the Red Root, and from nothing else; and if it be citrine and nothing else, Wisdom was with thee: it was not gotten by the care, nor, if it be freed from redness, by thy study. Behold, I have circumscribed nothing; if thou hast understanding, there be but few things unopened. Ye Sons of Wisdom ! turn then the Breym Body with an exceeding great fire; and it will yield gratefully what you desire. And see that you make that which is volatile, so that it cannot fly, and by means of that which flies not. And that which yet rests upon the fire, as it were itself a fiery flame, and that which in the heat of a boiling fire is corrupted, is cambar.
And know ye that the Art of this permanent water is our brass, and the colourings of its tincture and blackness is then changed into the true red.
I declare that, by the help of God I have spoken nothing but the truth. That which is destroyed is renovated, and hence the corruption is made manifest in the matter to be renewed, and hence the melioration will appear, and on either side it is a signal of Art.

SECTION V.

MY SON, that which is born of the crow is the beginning of Art. Behold, how I have obscured matter treated of, by circumlocution, depriving thee of the light. Yet this dissolved, this joined, this nearest and furtherest off I have named to thee. Roast those things, therefore, and boil them in that which comes from the horse's belly for seven, fourteen, or twenty-one days. Then will the Dragon eat his own wings and destroy himself; this being done, let it be put into a fiery furnace, which lute diligently, and observe that none of the spirit may escape. And know that the periods of the earth are in the water, which let it be as long as until thou puttest the same upon it. The matter being thus melted and burned take the brain thereof and triturate it in most sharp vinegar, till it becomes obscured. This done, it lives in the putrefaction, let the dark clouds which were in it before it was killed be converted into its own body. Let this process be repeated, as I have described, let it again die, as I before said, and then it lives.
In the life and death thereof we work with the spirits, for as it dies by the taking away of the spirit, so it lives in the return and is revived and rejoices therein. Being arrived then at this knowledge, that which thou hast been searching for is made in the Affirmation, I have even related to thee the joyful signs, even that which doth fix the body. But these things, and how they attained to the knowledge of this secret, are given by our ancestors in figures and types; behold, they are dead; I have opened the riddle, and the book of knowledge is revealed, the

hidden things I have uncovered, and have brought together the scattered truths within their boundary, and have conjoined many various forms -even I have associated the spirit. Take it as the gift of God.

SECTION VI.

It behoves thee to give thanks to God who has bestowed liberally of his bounty to the wise, who delivers us from misery and poverty. I am tempted and proven with the fullness of his substance and his probable wonders, and humbly pray God that whilst we live we may come to him. Remove thence, O Sons of Science, the unguents which we extract from fats, hair, verdigrease, tragacanth, and bones, which are written in the books of our fathers. But concerning the ointments which contain the tincture coagulate the fugitive, and adorn the sulphurs it behooves us to explain their disposition more at large ! and to unveil the Form, which is buried and hidden from other unguents; which is seen in disposition, but dwells in his own body, as fire in trees and stones, which by the most subtle art and ingenuity it behoves to extract without burning. And know that the Heaven is to be joined mediately with the Earth - but the Form is in a middle nature between tie heaven and earth, which is our water. But the water holds of all the first place which goes forth from this stone; but the second is gold; and the third is gold, only in a mean which is more noble than the water and the faeces. But in these are the smoke, the blackness and the death. It behoves us, therefore, to dry away the vapour from the water, to expel the blackness from the unguent, and death from the feces, and this by dissolution. By Which means we attain to the highest philosophy and secret of all hidden things.

SECTION VII.

Know ye then, O Sons of Science, there are seven bodies, of which gold is the first, the most perfect, the king of them, and their head, which neither the earth can corrupt nor fire devastate, nor the water change, for its complexion is equalised, and its nature regulated with respect to heat, cold, and moisture; nor is there anything in it which is superfluous, therefore the philosophers do buoy up and magnify themselves init saying that this gold, in relation of other bodies. is, as the sun amongst the stars, more splendid in Light; and as, by the power of God, every vegetable and all the fruits of the earth are perfected, so gold by the same power sustainneth all.

For as dough without a ferment cannot be fermented so when thou sublimest the body and purifiest it, separating the uncleanness from it, thou wilt then conjoin and mix them together, and put in the ferment confecting the earth and water. Then will the Ixir ferment even as dough doth ferment. Think of this, and see how the ferment in this case doth change the former natures to another thing. Observe, also, that there is no ferment otherwise than from the dough itself.

Observe, moreover, that the ferment whitens the confection and hinders it from turning, and holds the tincture lest it should fly, and rejoice the bodies, and makes them intimately to join and to enter one into another, and this is the key of the philosophers and the end of their work: and by this science, bodies are meliorated, and the operation of them, God assisting, is consummate.

But, through negligence and a false opinion of the matter, the operation may be perverted, as a mass of leaven growing corrupt, or milk turned with rennet for cheese, and musk among aromatics.
The sure colour of the golden matter for the red, and the nature thereof, is not sweetness; therefore we make of them sericum - ie Ixir; and of them we make the enamel of which we have already without and with the king's seal we have tinged the clay, and in that have set the colour of heaven, which augments the sight of them that see.
The Stone, therefore is the most precious gold without spots, evenly tempered, which neither fire nor air, nor water, nor earth is able to corrupt for it is the Universal Ferment rectifying all things in a medium composition, whose complexion is yellow and a true citrine colour.
The gold of the wise, boiled and well digested with a fiery water, makes Ixir; for the gold of the wise is more heavy than lead, which in a temperate composition is a ferment Ixir, and contrariwise, in our intemperate composition, is the confusion of the whole. For the work begins from the vegetable, next from the animal, as in a hen's egg, in which is the greatest help, and our earth is gold, of all which we make sericum, which is the ferment Ixir.

Alchemical Catechism

Q. What is the chief study of a Philosopher?
A. It is the investigation of the operations of Nature.

Q. What is the end of Nature?
A. God, Who is also its beginning.

Q. Whence are all things derived?
A. From one and indivisible Nature.

Q. Into how many regions is Nature separated?
A. Into four palmary regions.

Q. Which are they?
A. The dry, the moist, the warm, and the cold, which are the four elementary qualities, whence all things originate.

Q. How is Nature differentiated?
A. Into male and female.

Q. To what may we compare Nature?
A. To Mercury.

Q. Give a concise definition of Nature.
A. It is not visible, though it operates visibly; for it is simply a volatile spirit, fulfilling its office in bodies, and animated by the universal spirit-the divine breath, the central and universal fire, which vivifies all things that exist.

Q. What should be the qualities possessed by the examiners of Nature?
A. They should be like unto Nature herself. That is to say, they should be truthful, simple, patient, and persevering.

Q. What matters should subsequently engross their attention?
A. The philosophers should most carefully ascertain whether their designs are in harmony with Nature, and of a possible and attainable kind; if they would accomplish by their own power anything that is usually performed by the power of Nature, they must imitate her in every detail.

Q. What method must be followed in order to produce something which shall be developed to a superior degree than Nature herself develops it.
A. The manner of its improvement must be studied, and this is invariably operated by means of a like nature. For example, if it be desired to develop the intrinsic virtue of a given metal beyond its natural condition, the chemist must avail himself of the metallic nature itself, and must be able to discriminate between its male and female differentiations.

Q. Where does the metallic nature store her seeds?
A. In the four elements.

Q. With what materials can the philosopher alone accomplish anything?
A. With the germ of the given matter; this is its elixir or quintessence, more precious by far, and more useful, to the artist, than is Nature herself. Before the philosopher has extracted the seed, or germ, Nature, in his behalf, will be ready to perform her duty.

Q. What is the germ, or seed, of any substance?
A. It is the most subtle and perfect decoction and digestion of the substance itself; or, rather, it is the Balm of Sulphur, which is identical with the Radical Moisture of Metals.

Q. By what is this seed, or germ, engendered?
A. By the four elements, subject to the will of the Supreme Being, and through the direct intervention of the imagination of Nature.

Q. After what manner do the four elements operate?
A. By means of an incessant and uniform motion, each one, according to its quality, depositing its seed in the centre of the earth, where it is subjected to action and digested, and is subsequently expelled in an outward direction by the laws of movement.

Q. What do the philosophers understand by the centre of the earth?
A. A certain void place where nothing may repose, and the existence of which is assumed.

Q. Where, then, do the four elements expel and deposit their seeds?
A. In the ex-centre, or in the margin and circumference of the centre, which, after it has appropriated a portion, casts out the surplus into the region of excrement, scoriae, fire, and formless chaos.

Q. Illustrate this teaching by an example.
A. Take any level table, and set in its centre a vase filled with water; surround the vase with several things of various colours, especially salt, taking care that a proper distance intervenes between them all. Then pour out the water from the vase, and it will flow in streams here and there; one will encounter a substance of a red colour, and will assume a tinge of red; another will pass over the salt, and will contract a saline flavour; for it is certain that water does not modify the places which it traverses, but the diverse characteristics of places change the nature of water. In the same way the seed which is deposited by the four elements at the centre of the earth is subject to a variety of modifications in the places through which it passes, so that every existing substance is produced in the likeness of its channel, and when a seed on its arrival at a certain point encounters pure earth and pure water, a pure substance results, but the contrary in an opposite case.

Q. After what manner do the elements procreate this seed?
A. In order to the complete elucidation of this point, it must be observed that there are two gross and heavy elements and two that are volatile in character. Two, in like manner, are dry and two humid, one out of the four being actually excessively dry, and the other excessively moist. They are also masculine and feminine. Now, each of them has a marked tendency to reproduce its own species within its own sphere. Moreover, they are never in repose, but are perpetually interacting, and each of them separates, of and by itself, the most subtle portion thereof. Their general place of meeting is in the centre, even the centre of the Archeus, that servant of Nature, where coming to mix their several seeds, they agitate and finally expel them to the exterior.

Q. What is the true and the first matter of all metals?
A. The first matter, properly so called, is dual in its essence, or is in itself of a twofold nature; one, nevertheless, cannot create a metal without the concurrence of the other. The first and the palmary essence is an aerial humidity, blended with a warm air, in the form of a fatty water, which adheres to all substances indiscriminately, whether they are pure or impure.

Q. How has this humidity been named by Philosophers?
A. Mercury.

Q. By what is it governed?
A. By the rays of the Sun and Moon.

Q. What is the second matter?
A. The warmth of the earth -otherwise, that dry heat which is termed Sulphur by the Philosophers.

Q. Can the entire material body be converted into seed?
A. Its eight-hundredth part only-that, namely, which is secreted in the centre of the body in question, and may, for example, be seen in a grain of wheat.

Q. Of what use is the bulk of the matter as regards its seed?
A. It is useful as a safeguard against excessive heat, cold, moisture, or aridity, and, in general, all hurtful inclemency, against which it acts as an envelope.

Q. Would those artists who pretend to reduce the whole matter of any body into seed derive any advantage from the process, supposing it were possible to perform it?
A. None; on the contrary, their labour would be wholly unproductive, because nothing that is good can be accomplished by a deviation from natural methods.

Q. What, therefore, should be done?
A. The matter must be effectively separated from its impurities, for there is no metal, how pure soever, which is entirely free from imperfections, though their extent varies. Now all superfluities, cortices, and scoriae must be peeled off and purged out from the matter in order to discover its seed.

Q. What should receive the most careful attention of the Philosopher?
A. Assuredly, the end of Nature, and this is by no means to be looked for in the vulgar metals, because, these having issued already from the hands of the fashioner, it is no longer to be found therein.

Q. For what precise reason?
A. Because the vulgar metals, and chiefly gold, are absolutely dead, while ours, on the contrary, are absolutely living, and possess a soul.

Q. What is the life of metals?
A. It is no other substance than fire, when they are as yet imbedded in the mines.

Q. What is their death?
A. Their life and death are in reality one principle, for they die, as they live, by fire, but their death is from a fire of fusion.

Q. After what manner are metals conceived in the womb of the earth?
A. When the four elements have developed their power or virtue in the centre of the earth, and have deposited their seed, the Archeus of Nature, in the course of a distillatory process, sublimes them superficially by the warmth and energy of the perpetual movement.

Q. Into what does the wind resolve itself when it is distilled through the pores of the earth?
A. It resolves itself into water, whence all things spring; in this state it is merely a humid vapour, out of which there is subsequently evolved the principiated principle of all substances, which also serves as the first matter of the Philosophers.

Q. What then is this principiated principle, which is made use of as the first matter by the Children of Knowledge in the philosophic achievement?
A. It is this identical matter, which, the moment it is conceived, receives a permanent and unchangeable form.

Q. Are Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, Venus, the Sun, the Moon, etc., separately endowed with individual seed?
A. One is common to them all; their differences are to be accounted for by the: locality from which they are derived, not to speak of the fact that Nature completes her work with far greater rapidity in the procreation of silver than in that of gold, and so of the other metals, each in its own proportion.

Q. How is gold formed in the bowels of the earth?
A. When this vapour, of which we have spoken, is sublimed in the centre of the earth, and when it has passed through warm and pure places, where a certain sulphureous grease adheres to the channels, then this vapour, which the Philosophers have denominated their Mercury, becomes adapted and joined to this grease, which it sublimes with itself; from such amalgamation there is produced a certain unctuousness, which, abandoning the vaporous form, assumes that of grease, and is sublimised in other places, which have been cleansed by this preceding vapour, and the earth whereof has consequently been rendered more subtle, pure, and humid; it fills the pores of this earth, is joined thereto, and gold is produced as a result.

Q. How is Saturn engendered?
A. It occurs when the said unctuosity, or grease, passes through places which are totally impure and cold.

Q. How is Venus brought forth?
A. She is produced in localities where the earth itself is pure, but is mingled with impure sulphur.

Q. What power does the vapour, which we have recently mentioned, possess in the centre of the earth?
A. By its continual progress it has the power of perpetually rarefying whatsoever is crude and impure, and of successively attracting to itself all that is pure around it.

Q. What is the seed of the first matter of all things?
A. The first matter of things, that is to say, the matter of principiating principles is begotten by Nature, without the assistance of any other seed; in other words, Nature receives the matter from the elements, whence it subsequently brings forth the seed.

Q. What, absolutely speaking, is therefore the seed of things?
A. The seed in a body is no other thing than a congealed air, or a humid vapour, which is useless except it be dissolved by a warm vapour.

Q. How is the generation of seed comprised in the metallic kingdom?
A. By the artifice of Archeus the four elements, in the first generation of Nature, distil a ponderous vapour of water into the centre of the earth ; this is the seed of metals, and it is called Mercury, not on account of its essence, but because of its fluidity, and the facility with which it will adhere to each and every thing.

Q. Why is this vapour compared to sulphur?
A. Because of its internal heat.

Q. From what species of Mercury are we to conclude that the metals are composed?
A. The reference is exclusively to the Mercury of the Philosophers, and in no sense to the common or vulgar substance, which cannot become a seed, seeing that, like other metals, it already contains its own seed.

Q. What, therefore, must actually be accepted as the subject of our matter?
A. The seed alone, otherwise the fixed grain, and not the whole body, which is differentiated into Sulphur, or living male, and into Mercury, or living female.

Q. What operation must be afterwards performed
A. They must be joined together, so that they may form a germ, after which they will proceed to the procreation of a fruit which is conformed to their nature.

Q. What is the part of the artist in this operation?
A. The artist must do nothing but separate that which is subtle from that which is gross.

Q. To what, therefore, is the whole philosophic combination reduced?
A. The development of one into two, and the reduction of two into one, and nothing further.

Q. Whither must we turn for the seed and life of meals and minerals?
A. The seed of minerals is properly the water which exists in the centre
And the heart of the minerals.

Q. How does Nature operate by the help of Art?
A. Every seed, whatsoever its kind, is useless, unless by Nature or Art it is placed in a suitable matrix, where it receives its life by the coction of the germ! and by the congelation of the pure particle, or fixed grain.

Q. How is the seed subsequently nourished and preserved?
A. By the warmth of its body.

Q. What is therefore performed by the artist in the mineral kingdom?
A. He finishes what cannot be finished by Nature on account of the crudity of the air, which has permeated the pores of all bodies by its violence, but on the surface and not in the bowels of the earth.

Q. What correspondence have the metals among themselves?
A. It is necessary for a proper comprehension of the nature of this correspondence to consider the position of the planets, and to pay attention to Saturn, which is the highest of all, and then is succeeded by Jupiter, next by Mars, the Sun, Venus, Mercury, and, lastly, by the Moon. It must be observed that the influential virtues of the planets do not ascend but descend, and experience teaches us that Mars can be easily converted into Venus, not Venus into Mars, which is of a lower sphere. So, also, Jupiter can be easily transmuted into Mercury, because Jupiter is superior to Mercury, the one being second after the firmament, the other second

above the earth, and Saturn is highest of all, while the Moon is lowest. The Sun enters into all, but it is never ameliorated by its inferiors. It is clear that there is a large correspondence between Saturn and the Moon, in the middle of which is the Sun; but to all these changes the Philosopher should strive to administer the Sun.

Q. When the Philosophers speak of gold and silver, from which they extract their matter, are we to suppose that they refer to the vulgar gold and silver?
A. By no means; vulgar silver and gold are dead, while those of the Philosophers are full of life.

Q. What is the object of research among the Philosophers?
A. Proficiency in the art of perfecting what Nature has left imperfect in the mineral kingdom, and the attainment of the treasure of the Philosophical Stone.

Q. What is this Stone?
A. The Stone is nothing else than the radical humidity of the elements, perfectly purified and educed into a sovereign fixation, which causes it to perform such great things for health, life being resident exclusively in the humid radical.

Q. In what does the secret of accomplishing this admirable work consist?
A. It consists in knowing how to educe from potentiality into activity the innate warmth, or the fire of Nature, which is enclosed in the centre of the radical humidity.

Q. What are the precautions which must be made use of to guard against failure in the work?
A. Great pains must be taken to eliminate excrements from the matter, and to conserve nothing but the kernel, which contains all the virtue of the compound.

Q. Why does this medicine heal every species of disease?
A. It is not on account of tile variety of its qualities, but simply because it powerfully fortifies the natural warmth, which it gently stimulates, while other physics irritate it by too violent an action.

Q How can you demonstrate to me the truth of the art in the matter of the tincture?
A. Firstly, its truth is founded on the fact that the physical powder, being composed of the same substance as the metals, namely, quicksilver, has the faculty of combining with these in fusion, one nature easily embracing another which is like itself. Secondly, seeing that the imperfection of the base metals is owing to the crudeness of their quicksilver, and to that alone, the physical powder, which is a ripe and decocted quicksilver, and, in itself a pure fire, can easily communicate to them its own maturity, and can transmute them into its nature, after it has attracted their crude humidity, that is to say, their quicksilver, which is the sole substance that transmutes them, the rest being nothing but scoriae and excrements, which are rejected in projection.

Q. What road should the Philosopher follow that he may attain to the knowledge and execution of the physical work?
A. That precisely which was followed by the Great Architect of the Universe in the creation of the world, by observing how the chaos was evolved.

Q. What was the matter of the chaos?
A. It could be nothing else than a humid vapour, because water alone enters into all created substances, which all finish in a strange term, this term being a proper subject for the impression of all forms.

Q. Give me an example to illustrate what you have just stated.
A. An example may be found in the special productions of composite substances, the seeds of which invariably begin by resolving themselves into a certain humour, which is the chaos of the particular matter, whence issues, by a kind of irradiation, the complete form of the plant. Moreover, it should be observed that Holy Scripture makes no mention of anything except water as the material subject whereupon the Spirit of God brooded, nor of anything except light as the universal form of things.

Q. What profit may the Philosopher derive from these considerations, and what should he especially remark in the method of creation which was pursued by the Supreme Being?
A. In the first place he should observe the matter out of which the world was made; he will see that out of this confused mass, the Sovereign Artist began by extracting light, that this light in the same moment dissolved the darkness which covered the face of the earth, and that it served as the universal form of the matter. He will then easily perceive that in the generation of all composite substances, a species of irradiation takes place, and a separation of light and darkness, wherein Nature is an undeviating copyist of her Creator. The Philosopher will equally understand after what manner, by the action of this light, the empyrean, or firmament which divides the superior and inferior waters, was subsequently produced; how the sky was studded with luminous bodies; and how the necessity for the moon arose, which was owing to the space intervening between the things above and the things below; for the moon is an intermediate torch between the superior and the inferior worlds, receiving the celestial influences and communicating them to the earth. Finally he will understand how the Creator, in the gathering of the waters, produced dry land.

Q. How many heavens can you enumerate?
A. Properly there is one only, which is the firmament that divides the waters from the waters. Nevertheless, three are admitted, of which the first is the space that is above the clouds. In this heaven the waters are rarefied, and fall upon the fixed stars, and it is also in this space that the planets and wandering stars perform their revolutions. The second heaven is the firmament of the fixed stars, while the third is the abode of the supercelestial waters.

Q. Why is the rarefaction of the waters confined to the first heaven?
A. Because it is in the nature of rarefied substances to ascend, and because God, in His eternal laws, has assigned its proper sphere to everything.

Q. Why does each celestial body invariably revolve about an axis?
A. It is by reason of the primeval impetus which it received, and by virtue of the same law which will cause any heavy substance suspended from a thread to turn with the same velocity, if the power which impels its motion be always equal.

Q. Why do the superior waters never descend?
A. Because of their extreme rarefaction. It is for this reason that a skilled chemist can derive more profit from the study of rarefaction than from any other science whatsoever.

Q. What is the matter of the firmament?
A. It is properly air, which is more suitable than water as a medium of light.

Q. After the separation of the waters from the dry earth, what was performed by the Creator to originate generation?
A. He created a certain light which was destined for this office; He placed it in the central fire, and moderated this fire by the humidity of water and by the coldness of earth, so as to keep a check upon its energy and adapt it to His design.

Q. What is the action of this central fire?
A. It continually operates upon the nearest humid matter, which it exalts into vapour; now this vapour is the mercury of Nature and the first matter of the three kingdoms.

Q. How is the sulphur of Nature subsequently formed?
A. By the interaction of the central fire and the mercurial vapour.

Q. How is the salt of the sea produced?
A. By the action of the same fire upon aqueous humidity, when the aerial humidity, which is contained therein, has been exhaled.

Q. What should be done by a truly wise Philosopher when he has once mastered the foundation and the order in the procedure of the Great Architect of the Universe in the construction of all that exists in Nature?
A. He should, as far as may be possible, become a faithful copyist of his Creator. In the physical chaos he should make his chaos such as the original actually was; he should separate the light from the darkness : he should form his firmament for the separation of the waters which are above from the waters which are below, and should successively accomplish, point by point, the entire sequence of the creative act.

Q. With what is this grand and sublime operation performed?
A. With one single corpuscle, or minute body, which, so to speak, contains nothing but faeces, filth, and abominations, but whence a certain tenebrous and mercurial humidity is extracted, which contains in itself all that is required by the Philosopher, because, as a fact, he is in search of nothing hut the true Mercury.

Q. What kind of mercury, therefore, must he make use of in performing the work? A. Of a mercury which, as such, is not found on the earth, but is extracted from bodies, yet not from vulgar mercury, as it has been falsely said.

Q. Why is the latter unfitted to the needs of our work?
A. Because the wise artist must take notice that vulgar mercury has an insufficient quantity of sulphur, and he should consequently operate upon a body created by Nature, in which Nature herself has united the sulphur and mercury that it is the work of the artist to separate.

Q. What must he subsequently do?
A. He must purify them and join them anew together.

Q. How do you denominate the body of which we have been speaking?
A. The RUDE STONE, Or Chaos, or Iliaste, or Hyle--that confused mass which is known but universally despised.

Q. As you have told me that Mercury is the one thing which the Philosopher must absolutely understand, will you give me a circumstantial description of it, so as to avoid misconception?
A. In respect of its nature, our Mercury is dual--fixed and volatile; in regard to its motion, it is also dual, for it has a motion of ascent and of descent; by that of descent, it is the influence of plants, by which it stimulates the drooping fire of Nature, and this is its first office previous to congelation. By its ascensional movement, it rises, seeking to be purified, and as this is after congelation, it is considered to be the radical moisture of substances, which, beneath its vile scoriae, still preserves the nobility of its first origin.

Q. How many species of moisture do you suppose to be in each composite thing?
A. There are three--the Elementary, which is properly the vase of the other elements; the Radical, which, accurately speaking, is the oil, or balm, in which the entire virtue of the subject is resident--lastly, the Alimentary, the true natural dissolvent, which draws up the drooping internal fire, causing corruption and blackness by its humidity, and fostering and sustaining the subject.

Q. How many species of Mercury are there known to the Philosophers?
A. The Mercury of the Philosophers may be regarded under four aspects; the first is entitled the Mercury of bodies, which is actually their concealed seed; the second is the Mercury of Nature, which is the Bath or Vase of the Philosophers, otherwise the humid radical; to the third has been applied the designation, Mercury of the Philosophers, because it is found in their laboratory and in their minera. It is the sphere of Saturn; it is the Diana of the Wise; it is the true salt of metals, after the acquisition of which the true philosophic work may be truly said to have begun. In its fourth aspect, it is called Common Mercury, which yet is not that of the Vulgar, but rather is properly the true air of the Philosophers, the true middle substance of water, the true secret and concealed fire, called also common fire, because it is common to all minerae, for it is the substance of metals, and thence do they derive their quantity and quality.

Q. How many operations art comprised in our work?
A. There is one only, which may be resolved into sublimation, and sublimation, according to Geber, is nothing other than the elevation of the dry matter by the mediation of fire, with adherence to its own vase.

Q. What precaution should be taken in reading the Hermetic Philosophers ?
A. Great care, above all, must be observed upon this point, lest what they say upon the subject should be interpreted literally and in accordance with the mere sound of the words: For the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.

Q. What books should be read in order to have an acquaintance with our science?
A. Among the ancients, all the works of Hermes should especially be studied; in the next place, a certain book, entitled The Passage of the Red Sea, and another, The Entrance into the Promised Land. Paracelsus also should be read before all among elder writers, and, among other treatises, his Chemical Pathway, or the Manual of Paracelsus, which contains all the mysteries of demonstrative physics and the most arcane Kabbalah. This rare and unique manuscript work exists only in the Vatican Library, but Sendivogius had the good fortune to take a copy of it, which has helped in the illumination of the sages of our order. Secondly, Raymond Lully must be read, and his Vade Mecum above all, his dialogue called the Tree of Life, his testament, and his codicil. There must, however, be a certain precaution exercised in respect to the two last, because, like those of Geber, and also of Arnold de Villanova, they abound in false recipes and futile fictions, which seem to have been inserted with the object of more effectually disguising the truth from the ignorant. In the third place, the Turba Philosophorum which is a collection of ancient authors, contains much that is materially good, though there is much also which is valueless. Among mediaeval writers Zachary, Trevisan, Roger Bacon, and a certain anonymous author, whose book is entitled The Philosophers, should be held especially high in the estimation of the student. Among moderns the most worthy to be prized are John Fabricius, Francois de Nation, and Jean D'Espagnet, who wrote Physics Restored, though, to say the truth, he has imported some false precepts and fallacious opinions into his treatise.

Q. When may the Philosopher venture to undertake the work?
A. When he is, theoretically, able to extract, by means of a crude spirit, a digested spirit out of a body in dissolution, which digested spirit he must again rejoin to the vital oil.

Q. Explain me this theory in a clearer manner.
A. It may be demonstrated more completely in the actual process; the great experiment may be undertaken when the Philosopher, by the medium of a vegetable menstruurn, united to a mineral menstruum, is qualified to dissolve a third essential menstruum, with which menstruums united he must wash the earth, and then exalt it into a celestial quintessence, to compose the sulphureous thunderbolt, which instantaneously penetrates substances and destroys their excrements.

Q. Have those persons a proper acquaintance with Nature who pretend to make use of vulgar gold for seed, and of vulgar mercury for the dissolvent, or the earth in which it should be sown?
A. Assuredly not, because neither the one nor the other possesses the external agent--gold, because it has been deprived of it by decoction, and mercury because it has never had it.

Q. In seeking this auriferous seed elsewhere than in gold itself, is there no danger of producing a species of monster, since one appears to be departing from Nature?
A. It is undoubtedly true that in gold is contained the auriferous seed, and that in a more perfect condition than it is found in any other body; but this does not force us to make use of vulgar gold, for such a seed is equally found in each of the other metals, and is nothing else but that fixed grain which Nature has infused in the first congelation of mercury, all metals

having one origin and a common substance, as will be ultimately unveiled to those who become worthy of receiving it by application and assiduous study.

Q. What follows from this doctrine?
A. It follows that, although the seed is more perfect in gold, it may be extracted much more easily from another body than from gold itself, other bodies being more open, that is to say, less digested, and less restricted in their humidity.

Q. Give me an example taken from Nature.
A. Vulgar gold may be likened to a fruit which, having come to a perfect maturity, has been cut off from its tree, and though it contains a most perfect and well-digested seed, notwithstanding, should anyone set it in the ground, with a view to its multiplication, much time, trouble, and attention will be consumed in the development of its vegetative capabilities. On the other hand, if a cutting, or a root, be taken from the same tree, and similarly planted, in a short time, and with no trouble, it will spring up and produce much fruit.

Q. Is it necessary that an amateur of this science should understand the formation of metals in the bowels of the earth if he wishes to complete his work ?
A. So indispensable is such a knowledge that should anyone fail, before all other studies, to apply himself to its attainment, and to imitate Nature point by point therein, he will never succeed in accomplishing anything but what is worthless.

Q. How, then, does Nature deposit metals in the bowels of the earth, and of what does she compose them ?
A. Nature manufactures them all out of sulphur and mercury, and forms them by their double vapour.

Q. What do you mean by this double vapour, and how can metals be formed thereby?
A. In order to a complete understanding of this question, it must first be stated that mercurial vapour is united to sulphureous vapour in a cavernous place which contains a saline water, which serves as their matrix. Thus is formed, firstly, the Vitriol of Nature; secondly, by the commotion of the elements, there is developed out of this Vitriol of Nature a new vapour, which is neither mercurial nor sulphureous, yet is allied to both these natures, and this, passing through places to which the grease of sulphur adheres, is joined therewith, and out of their union a glutinous substance is produced, otherwise, a formless mass, which is permeated by the vapour that fills these cavernous places. By this vapour, acting through the sulphur it contains, are produced the perfect metals, provided that the vapour and the locality are pure. If the locality and the vapour are impure, imperfect metals result. The terms perfection and imperfection have reference to various degrees of concoction.

Q. What is contained in this vapour?
A. A spirit of light and a spirit of fire, of the nature of the celestial bodies, which properly should be considered as the form of the universe.

Q. What does this vapour represent?
A. This vapour, thus impregnated by the universal spirit, represents, in a fairly complete way, the original Chaos, which contained all that was required for the original creation, that is, universal matter and universal form.

Q. And one cannot, notwithstanding, make use of vulgar mercury in the process?
A. No, because vulgar mercury, as already made plain, is devoid of external agent.

Q. Whence comes it that common mercury is without its external agent?
A. Because in the exaltation of the double vapour, the commotion has been so great and searching, that the spirit, or agent, has evaporated, as occurs, with very close similarity, in the fusion of metals. The result is that the unique mercurial part is deprived of its masculine or sulphureous agent, and consequently can never be transmuted into gold by Nature.

Q. How many species of gold are distinguished by the Philosophers?
A. Three sorts :--Astral Gold, Elementary Gold, and Vulgar Gold.

Q. What is astral gold?
A. Astral Gold has its centre in the sun, which communicates it by its rays to all inferior beings. It is an igneous substance, which receives a continual emanation of solar corpuscles that penetrate all things sentient, vegetable, and mineral.

Q. What do you refer to under the term Elementary Gold ?
A. This is the most pure and fixed portion of the elements, and of all that is composed of them. All sublunary beings included in the three kingdoms contain in their inmost centre a precious grain of this elementary gold.

Q. Give me some description of Vulgar Gold ?
A. It is the most beautiful metal of our acquaintance, the best that Nature can produce, as perfect as it is unalterable in itself.

Q. Of what species of gold is the Stone of the Philosophers ?
A. It is of the second species, as being the most pure portion of all the metallic elements after its purification, when it is termed living philosophical gold. A perfect equilibrium and equality of the four elements enter into the Physical Stone, and four things are indispensable for the accomplishment of the work, namely, composition, allocation, mixture, and union, which, once performed according to the rules of art, will beget the lawful Son of the Sun, and the Phoenix which eternally rises out of its own ashes.

Q. What is actually the living gold of the Philosophers?
A. It is exclusively the fire of Mercury, or that igneous virtue, contained in the radical moisture, to which it has already communicated the fixity and the nature of the sulphur, whence it has emanated, the mercurial character of the whole substance of philosophical sulphur permitting it to be alternatively termed mercury.

Q. What other name is also given by the Philosophers to their living gold ?
A. They also term it their living sulphur, and their true fire; they recognize its existence in all bodies, and there is nothing that can subsist without it.

Q. Where must we look for our living gold, our living sulphur, and our true fire ?
A. In the house of Mercury.

Q. By what is this fire nourished?
A. By the air.

Q. Give me a comparative illustration of the power of this fire ?
A. To exemplify the attraction of this interior fire, there is no better comparison than that which is derived from the thunderbolt, which originally is simply a dry, terrestrial exhalation, united to a humid vapour. By exaltation, and by assuming the igneous nature, it acts on the humidity which is inherent to it; this it attracts to itself, transmutes it into its own nature, and then rapidly precipitates itself to the earth, where it is attracted by a fixed nature which is like unto its own.

Q. What should be done by the Philosopher after he has extracted his Mercury ?
A. He should develop it from potentiality into activity.

Q. Cannot Nature perform this of herself?
A. No; because she stops short after the first sublimation, and out of the matter which is thus disposed do the metals engender.

Q. What do the Philosophers understand by their gold and silver?
A. The Philosophers apply to their Sulphur the name of Gold, and to their Mercury the name of Silver.

Q. Whence are they derived?
A. I have already stated that they are derived from a homogeneous body wherein they are found in great abundance, whence also Philosophers know how to extract both by an admirable, and entirely philosophical, process.

Q. When this operation has been duly performed, to what other point of the practice must they next apply themselves?
A. To the confection of the philosophical amalgam, which must be done with great care, but can only be accomplished after the preparation and sublimation of the Mercury.

Q. When should your matter be combined with the living gold?
A. During the period of amalgamation only, that is to say, Sulphur is introduced into it by means of the amalgamation, and thenceforth there is one substance; the process is shortened by the addition of Sulphur, while the tincture at the same time is augmented.

Q. What is contained in the centre of the radical moisture ?
A. It contains and conceals Sulphur, which is covered with a hard rind.

Q. What must be done to apply it to the Great Work?
A. It must be drawn, out of its bonds with consummate skill, and by the method of putrefaction.

Q. Does Nature, in her work in the mines, possess a menstruum which is adapted to the dissolution and liberation of this sulphur?
A. No; because there is no local movement. Could Nature, unassisted, dissolve, putrefy, and purify the metallic body, she would herself provide us with !he Physical Stone, which is Sulphur exalted and increased in virtue.

Q. Can you elucidate this doctrine by an example?
A. By an enlargement of the previous comparison of a fruit, or a seed, which, in the first place, is put into the earth for its solution, and afterwards for its multiplication. Now, the Philosopher, who is in a position to discern what is good seed, extracts it from its centre, consigns it to its proper earth, when it has been well cured and prepared, and therein he rarefies it in such a manner that its prolific virtue is increased and indefinitely multiplied.

Q. In what does the whole secret of the seed consist ?
A. In the true knowledge of its proper earth.

Q. What do you understand by the seed in the work Of the Philosophers ?
A. I understand the interior heat, or the specific spirit, which is enclosed in the humid radical, which, in other words, is the middle substance of living silver, the proper sperm of metals, which contains its own seed.

Q. How do you set free the sulphur from its bonds?
A. By putrefaction.

Q. What is the earth of minerals ?
A. It is their proper menstruum.

Q. What pains must be taken by the Philosopher to extract that part which he requires?
A. He must take great pains to eliminate the fetid vapours and impure sulphurs, after which the seed must be injected.

Q. By what indication may the Artist be assured that he is in the right road at the beginning of his work?
A. When he finds that the dissolvent and the thing dissolved are converted into one form and one matter at the period of dissolution.

Q. How many solutions do you count in the Philosophic Work?
A. There are three. The first solution is that which reduces the crude and metallic body into its elements of sulphur and of living silver; the second is that of the physical body, and the third is the solution of the mineral earth.

Q. How is the metallic body reduced by the first solution into mercury, and then into sulphur?
A. By the secret artificial fire, which is the Burning Star.

Q. How is this operation performed?
A. By extracting from the subject, in the first place, the mercury or vapour of the elements, and, after purification, by using it to liberate the sulphur from its bonds, by corruption, of which blackness is the indication.

Q. How is the second solution performed ?
A. When the physical body is resolved into the two substances previously mentioned, and has acquired the celestial nature.

Q. What is the name which is applied by Philosophers to the Matter during this period?
A, It is called their Physical Chaos, and it is, in fact, the true First Matter, a name which can hardly be applied before the conjunction of the male--which is sulphur--with the female--which is silver.

Q. To what does the third solution refer?
A. It is the humectation of the mineral earth and it is closely bound up with multiplication.

Q. What fire must be made use of in our work ?
A. That fire which is used by Nature.

Q. What is the potency of this fire?
A. It dissolves everything that is in the world, because it is the principle of all dissolution and corruption.

Q. Why is it also termed Mercury ?
A. Because it is in its nature aerial, and a most subtle vapour, which partakes at the same time of sulphur, whence it has contracted some contamination.

Q. Where is this fire concealed ?
A. It is concealed in the subject of art.

Q. Who is it that is familiar with, and can produce, this fire?
A. It is known to the wise, who can both produce it and purify it.

Q. What is the essential potency and characteristic of this fire ?
A. It is excessively dry, and is continually in motion; it seeks only to disintegrate and to educe things from potentiality into actuality; it is that, in a word, which coming upon solid places in mines, circulates in a vaporous form upon the matter, and dissolves it.

Q. How may this fire be most easily distinguished?
A. By the sulphureous excrements in which it is enveloped, and by the saline environment with which it is clothed.

Q. What must be added to this fire so as to accentuate its capacity for incineration in the feminine species?
A. On account of its extreme dryness it requires to be moistened.

Q. How many philosophical fires do you enumerate ?
A. There are in all three--the natural, the unnatural, and the contra-natural.

Q. Explain to me these three species of fires.
A. The natural fire is the masculine fire, or the chief agent; the unnatural is the feminine, which is the dissolvent of Nature, nourishing a white smoke, and assuming that form. This smoke is quickly dissipated, unless much care be exercised, and it is almost incombustible, though by philosophical sublimation it becomes corporeal and resplendent. The contra-natural fire is that which disintegrates compounds and has the power to unbind what has' been bound very closely by Nature.

Q. Where is our matter to be found?
A. It is to be found everywhere, but it must specially be sought in metallic nature, where it is more easily available than elsewhere.

Q. What kind must be preferred before all others ?
A. The most mature, the most appropriate, and the easiest; but care, before all things, must be taken that the metallic essence shall be present, not only potentially but in actuality, and that there is, moreover, a metallic splendour.

Q. Is everything contained in this subject?
A. Yes; but Nature, at the same time, must be assisted, so that the work may be perfected and hastened, and this by the means which are familiar to the higher grades of experiment.

Q. Is this subject exceedingly precious ?
A. It is vile, and originally is without native elegance; should anyone say that it is saleable, it is the species to which they refer, but, fundamentally, it is not saleable, because it is useful in our work alone.

Q. What does our Matter contain?
A. It contains Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury.

Q. What operation is it most important to be able to perform?
A. The successive extraction of the Salt, Sulphur, and Mercury.

Q. How is that done ?
A. By sole and perfect sublimation.

Q. What is in the first place extracted ?
A. Mercury in the form of a white smoke.

Q. What follows?
A. Igneous water, or Sulphur.

Q. What then?
A. Dissolution with purified salt, in the first place volatilising that which is fixed, and afterwards fixing that which is volatile into a precious earth, which is the Vase of the Philosophers, and is wholly perfect.

Q. When must the Philosopher begin his enterprise ?
A. At the moment of daybreak, for his energy must never be relaxed.

Q. When may he take his rest?
A. When the work has come to its perfection.

Q. At what hour is the end of the work ?
A. High noon, that is to say, the moment when the Sun is in its fullest power, and the Son of the Day-Star in its most brilliant splendour.

Q. What is the pass-word of Magnesia?
A. You know whether I can or should answer:--I reserve my speech.

Q. Give me the greeting of the Philosophers.
A. Begin ; I will reply to you.

Q. Are you an apprentice Philosopher?
A. My friends, and the wise, know me.

Q. What is the age of a Philosopher ?
A. From the moment of his researches to that of his discoveries, the Philosopher does not age.

The Mirror of Alchemy

CHAPTER I.
Of the Definitions of Alchemy.

In many ancient Books there are found many definitions of this Art, the intentions whereof we must consider in this Chapter. For Hermes said of this Science: Alchemy is a Corporal Science simply composed of one and by one, naturally conjoining things more precious, by knowledge and effect, and converting them by a natural commixtion into a better kind. A certain other said: Alchemy is a Science, teaching how to transform any kind of metal into another: and that by a proper medicine, as it appeared by many Philosophers' Books. Alchemy therefore is a science teaching how to make and compound a certain medicine, which is called Elixir, the which when it is cast upon metals or imperfect bodies, does fully perfect them in the very projection.

CHAPTER II.

Of the natural principles, and procreation of Minerals.

Secondly, I will perfectly declare the natural principles and procreations of Minerals: where first it is to be noted, that the natural principles in the mines, are Argent-vive, and Sulphur. All metals and minerals, whereof there be sundry and diverse kinds, are begotten of these

two: but: I must tell you, that nature always intends and strives to the perfection of Gold: but many accidents coming between, change the metals, as it is evidently to be seen in diverse of the Philosophers books. For according to the purity and impurity of the two aforesaid principles, Argent-vive, and Sulphur, pure, and impure metals are engendered: to wit, Gold, Silver, Steel, Lead, Copper, and Iron: of whose nature, that is to say, purity, and impurity, or unclean superfluity and defect, give ear to that which follows.

Of the nature of Gold.

Gold is a perfect body, engendered of Argent-vive pure, fixed, clear, red, and of Sulphur clean, fixed, red, not burning, and it wants nothing.

Of the nature of silver.

Silver is a body, clean, pure, and almost perfect, begotten of Argent-vive, pure, almost fixed, clear, and white, and of such a like Sulphur: It wants nothing, save a little fixation, color, and weight.

Of the nature of Steel.

Steel is a body clean, imperfect, engendered of Argent-vive pure, fixed & not fixed clear, white outwardly, but red inwardly, and of the like Sulphur. It wants only decoction or digestion,

Of the nature of Lead.

Lead is an unclean and imperfect body, engendered of Argent-vive impure, not fixed, earthy, dressy, somewhat white outwardly, and red inwardly, and of such a Sulphur in part burning, It wants purity, fixation, color, and firing.

Of the nature of Copper.

Copper is an unclean and imperfect body, engendered of Argent-vive, impure, not fixed, earthy, burning, red not clear, and of the like Sulphur. It wants purity, fixation, and weight: and has too much of an impure color, and earthiness not burning.

Of the nature Iron.

Iron is an unclean and imperfect body, engendered of Argent-vive impure, too much fixed, earthy, burning, white and red not clear, and of the like Sulphur: It wants fusion, purity, and weight: It has too much fixed unclean Sulphur, and burning earthiness. That which has been spoken, every Alchemist must diligently observe.

CHAPTER III.

Out of what things the matter of Elixir must be more nearly extracted.

The generation of metals, as well perfect, as imperfect, is sufficiently declared by that which

has been already spoken, Now let us return to the imperfect matter that must be chosen and made perfect. Seeing that by the former Chapters we have been taught, that all metals are engendered of Argent-vive and Sulphur, and how that their impurity and uncleanness does corrupt, and that nothing may be mingled with metals which have not been made or sprung from them, it: remains clean enough, that no strange thing which has not his original from these two, is able to perfect them, or to make a Change and new transmutation of them: so that it is to be wondered at, that any wise man should set his mind upon living creatures, or vegetables which are far off, when there be minerals to be found near enough: neither may we in any way think, that any of the Philosophers placed the Art in the said remote things, except it were by way of comparison: but of the aforesaid two, all metals are made, neither does any thing cleave unto them or is joined with them, not yet changes them, but that which is of them, and so of right we must take Argent-vive and Sulphur for the matter of our stone: Neither does Argent-vive by itself alone, nor Sulphur by itself alone, beget any metal, but of the commixtion of them both, diverse metals and minerals are diversely brought forth. Our matter therefore must be chosen of the commixtion of them both: but our final secret is most excellent, and most hidden, to wit, of what mineral thing that is more near than others, it should be made: and in making choice hereof, we must be very wary. I put the case then, if our matter were first of all drawn out of vegetables, (of which sort are herbs, trees, and whatsoever springs out of the earth) here we must first make Argent-vive & Sulphur, by a long decoction, from which things, and their operation we are excused: for nature herself offers unto us Argent-vive and Sulphur. And if we should draw it from living creatures (of which sort is man's blood, hair, urine, excrements, hens' eggs, and what else proceed from living creatures) we must likewise out of them extract Argent-vive and Sulphur by decoction, from which we are freed, as we were before. Or if we should choose it out of middle minerals (of which sort are all kinds of Magnesia, Marchasites, of Tutia, Coppers, Allums, Baurach, Salts, and many other) we should likewise, as afore, extract Argent-vive and Sulphur by decoction: from which as from the former, we are also excused. And if we should take one of the seven spirits by itself, as Argent-vive, or Sulphur alone, or Argent-vive and one of the two Sulphurs, or Sulphur-vive, or Auripigment, or Citrine Arsenicum, or red alone, or the like: we should never effect it, because since nature does never perfect anything without equal commixtion of both, neither can we: from these therefore, as from the foresaid Argent-vive and Sulphur in their nature we are excused. Finally, if we should choose them, we should mix everything as it is, according to a due proportion, which no man knows, and afterward decoct it to coagulation, into a solid lump: and therefore we are excused from receiving both of them in their proper nature: to wit, Argent-vive and Sulphur, seeing we know not their proportion, and that we may meet with bodies, wherein we shall find the said things proportioned, coagulated and gathered together, after a due manner. Keep this secret more secretly. Gold is a perfect masculine body, without any superfluity or diminution: and if it: should perfect imperfect bodies mingled with it by melting only, it should be Elixir to red. Silver is also a body almost perfect, and feminine, which if it should almost perfect imperfect bodies by his common melting only, it should be Elixir to white which it is not, nor cannot be, because they only are perfect. And if this perfection might be mixed with the imperfect, the imperfect should not be perfected with the perfect, but rather their perfection's should be diminished by the imperfect, and become imperfect. But if they were more than perfect,

either in a two-fold, four-fold, hundred-fold, or larger proportion, they might then well perfect the imperfect. And forasmuch as nature does always work simply, the perfection which is in them is simple, inseparable, and incommiscible, neither may they by art be put in the stone, for ferment to shorten the work, and so brought to their former state, because the most volatile does overcome the most fixed. And for that gold is a perfect body, consisting of Argent-vive, red and clear, and of such a Sulphur, therefore we choose it not for the matter of our stone to the red Elixir, because it is so simply perfect, without artificial mundification, and so strongly digested and fed with a natural heat, that with our artificial fire, we are scarcely able to work on gold or silver, And though nature does perfect anything, yet she cannot thoroughly mundify, or perfect and purify it, because she simply works on that which she has. If therefore we should choose gold or silver for the matter of the stone, we should hard and scantly find fire working in them. And although we are not ignorant of the fire, yet could we not come to the thorough mundification and perfection of it, by reason of his most firm knitting together, and natural composition: we are therefore excused for taking the first too red, or the second too white, seeing we may find out a thing or some body of as clean, or rather more clean Sulphur and Argent-vive, on which nature has wrought little or nothing at all, which with our artificial fire, and experience of our art, we are able to bring unto his due concoction, mundification, color and fixation, continuing our ingenious labor upon it. There must therefore be such a matter chosen, where in there is Argent-vive, clean, pure, clear, white and red, not fully complete, but equally and proportionably commixt after a due manner with the like Sulphur, and congealed into a solid mass, that by our wisdom and discretion, and by our artificial fire, we may attain unto the uttermost cleanness of it, and the purity of the same, and bring it to that pass, that after the work ended, it might be a thousand thousand times more strong and perfect, then the simple bodies themselves, decoct by their natural heat. Be therefore wise: for if you shall be subtle and witty in my Chapters (wherein by manifest prose I have laid open the matter of the stone easy to be known) you shall taste of that delightful thing, wherein the whole intention of the Philosophers is placed.

CHAPTER IIII.

Of the manner of working, and of moderating, and continuing the fire.

I hope ere this time you have already found out by the words already spoken (if you are not most dull, ignorant, and foolish) the certain matter of the learned Philosophers blessed stone, whereon Alchemy works, while we endeavor to perfect the imperfect, and that with things more then perfect. And for that nature has delivered us the imperfect only with the perfect, it is our part to make the matter (in the former Chapters declared unto us) more then perfect by our artificial labor. And if we know not the manner of working, what is the cause that we do not see how nature (which of long time has perfected metals) does continually work! Do we not see, that in the Mines through the continual heat that is in the mountains thereof, the grossness of water is so decocted and thickened, that in continuance of time it becomes Argent-vive? And that of the fatness of the earth through the same heat and decoction, Sulphur is engendered! And that through the same heat without intermission continued in

them, all metals are engendered of them according to their purity and impurity? and that nature does by decoction alone perfect or make all metals, as well perfect as imperfect? 0 extreme madness! what, I pray you, constrains you to seek to perfect the foresaid things by strange melancholical and fantastical regiments! as one says: Woe to you that will overcome nature, and make metals more then perfect by a new regiment, or work sprung from your own senseless brains. God has given to nature a straight way, to wit, continual concoction, and you like fools despise it, or else know it not. Again, fire and Azot, are sufficient for you. And in another place, Heat perfects all things. And elsewhere, see, see, see, and be not weary. And in another place, let your fire be gentle, and easy, which being always equal, may continue burning: and let it not increase, for if it does, you shall suffer great loss. And in another place, Know you that in one thing, to wit, the stone, by one way, to wit, decoction, and in one vessel the whole mastery is performed. And in another place, patiently, and continually, and in another place, grind it seven times. And in another place, It is ground with fire, And in another place, this work is very like to the creation of man: for as the Infant in the beginning is nourished with light meats, but the bones being strengthened with stronger: so this mastery also, first it must have an easy fire, whereby we must always work in every essence of decoction. And though we always speak of a gentle fire, yet in truth, we think that in governing the work, the fire must always by little and little be increased and augmented unto the end.

CHAPTER V.

Of the quality of the Vessel and Furnace.

The means and manner of working, we have already determined: now we are to speak of the Vessel and Furnace, in what sort, and of what things they must be made. Whereas nature by a natural fire decocts the metals in the Mines, she denies the like decoction to be made without a vessel fit for it. And if we propose to imitate nature in concocting, wherefore do we reject her vessel! Let us first of all therefore, see in what place the generation of metals is made. It does evidently appear in the places of Minerals, that in the bottom of the mountain there is heat continually alike, the nature whereof is always to ascend, and in the ascension it always dries up, and coagulates the thicker or grosser water hidden in the belly, or veins of the earth, or mountain, into Argent-vive. And if the mineral fatness of the same place arising out of the earth, be gathered warm together in the veins of the earth, it runs through the mountain, and becomes Sulphur. And as a man may see in the foresaid veins of that place, that Sulphur engendered of the fatness of the earth (as is before touched) meets with the Argent-vive (as it is also written) in the veins of the earth, and begets the thickness of the mineral water. There, through the continual equal heat in the mountain, in long process of time diverse metals are engendered, according to the diversity of the place. And in these Mineral places, you shall find a continual heat. For this cause we are of right to note, that the external mineral mountain is everywhere shut up within itself, and stony: for if the heat might issue out, there should never be engendered any metal. If therefore we intend to immitate nature, we must needs have such a furnace like unto the Mountains, not in greatness, but in continual heat, so that the fire put in, when it ascends, may find no vent: but that the heat may beat upon the

vessel being close shut, containing in it the matter of the stone: which vessel must be round, with a small neck, made of glass or some earth, representing the nature or close knitting together of glass: the mouth whereof must be signed or sealed with a covering of the same matter, or with lute. And as in the mines, the heat does not immediately touch the matter of Sulphur and Argent-vive, because the earth of the mountain comes everywhere between: So this fire must not immediately touch the vessel, containing the matter of the aforesaid things in it, but it must be put into another vessel, shut closed in the like manner, that so the temperate heat may touch the matter above and beneath, and where ever it be, more aptly and fitly: whereupon Aristotle says, in the light of lights, that Mercury is to be concocted in a three-fold vessel, and that the vessel must be of most hard Glass, or (which is better) of Earth possessing the nature of Glass.

CHAPTER VI.

Of the accidental and essential colours appearing in the work.

The matter of the stone thus ended, you shall know the certain manner of working, by what manner and regiment, the stone is often changed in decoction into diverse colors. Whereupon one says, So many colors, so many names. According to the diverse colors appearing in the work, the names likewise were varied by the Philosophers: whereon, in the first operation of our stone, it is called putrifaction, and our stone is made black: whereof one says, When you find it black, know that in that blackness whiteness is hidden, and you must extract the same from his most subtle blackness. But after putrifaction it waxes red, not with a true redness, of which one says: It is often red, and often of a citrine color, it often melts, and is often coagulated, before true whiteness. And it dissolves itself, it coagulates itself, it putrifies itself, it colors itself, it mortifies itself, it quickens itself it makes itself black, it makes itself white, it makes itself red. It is also green: whereon another says, Concoct it, till it appears green unto you, and that is the soul. And another, Know, that in that: green his soul bears dominion. There appears also before whiteness the peacocks color, whereon one says thus, Know you that all the colors in the world, or that may be imagined, appear before whiteness, and afterward true whiteness follows. Whereof one says: When it has been decocted pure and clean, that it shines like the eyes of fishes, then are we to expect his utility, and by that time the stone is congealed round, And another says: When you shall find whiteness atop in the glass, be assured that in that whiteness, redness is hidden: and this you must extract: but concoct it while it becomes all red: for between true whiteness and true redness, there is a certain ash-color: of which it is said, After whiteness, you cannot err, for increasing the fire, you shall come to an ash-color: of which another says: Do not set light by the ashes, for God shall give it to you molten: and then at the last the King is invested with a red crown the by will of God.

CHAPTER VII.

How to make projection of the medicine upon any imperfect body.

I have largely accomplished my promise of that great mastery, for making the most excellent Elixir, red and white. For conclusion, we are to treat of the manner of projection, which is the accomplishment of the work, the desired and expected joy. The red Elixir turns into a citrine color infinitely, and changes all metals into pure gold. And the white Elixir does infinitely whiten, and brings every metal to perfect whiteness. But we know that one metal is farther off from perfection then another, and one more near then another. And although every metal may by Elixir be reduced to perfection, nevertheless the nearest are more easily, speedily, and perfectly reduced, then those which are far distant, And when we meet with a metal that is near to perfection, we are thereby excused from many that are far off. And as for the metals which of them be near, and which far off, which of them I say be nearest to perfection, if you are wise and discrete, you shall find to be plainly and truly set out in my Chapters. And without doubt, he that is so quick sighted in this my Mirror, that by his own industry he can find out the true matter, he does full well know upon what body the medicine is to be projected to bring it to perfection. For the forerunners of this Art, who have found it out by their philosophy, do point out with their finger the direct and plain way, when they say: Nature, contains nature: Nature overcomes nature: and Nature meeting with her nature, exceedingly rejoices, and is changed into other natures, And in another place, Every like rejoices in his like: for likeness is said to be the cause of friendship, whereof many Philosophers have left a notable secret, Know you that the sour does quickly enter into his body, which may by no means be joined to another body, And in another place, The soul does quickly enter into his own body, which if you go about to join with another body, you shall loose your labor: for the nearness itself is more clear. And because corporeal things in this regiment are made incorporeal, and contrariwise things incorporeal corporeal, and in the shutting up of the work, the whole body is made a spiritual fixed thing: and because also that spiritual Elixir evidently, whether white or red, is so greatly prepared and decocted beyond his nature, it is no marvel that it cannot be mixed with a body, on which it is projected, being only melted. It is also a hard matter to Project it on a thousand thousand and more, and incontinently to penetrate and transmute them. I will therefore now deliver unto you a great and hidden secret. one part is to be mixed with a thousand of the next body, and let: all this be surely put into a fit vessel, and set it in a furnace of fixation, first with a lent fire, and afterwards increasing the fire for three days, till they be inseparably joined together, and this is a work of three days: then again and finally every part hereof by itself, must be projected upon another thousand parts of any near body: and this is a work of one day, Or one hour, or a moment, for which our wonderful God is eternally to be praised.

Bloomfield's Blossoms

1

When Phebus was entered the signe of the ramm,
In the month of march when all Doth springe,

Lying in my bed, an old man to me came.
Laying his hand on my buysy head slumbringe,
"I am," he said, "Tyme, producer of cunninge.
Awake & rise, prepare thy selfe quickly;
My entent is to bring thee to [the Campe of] philosophy.

2

"Bloomes & blossomes plentiful in that feild
Bynn pleasantly flourishinge, vernant with collers gay.
Liuely water fountaines, eke beastes both tame & wild
Ouershadowed with trees fruitful, & on euery spray
Melodiously singinge, the birdes doe sitt & say:
'Father, sonn, & holy ghoste, to one god [in] persons three;
Impery & honor be to the holy trinitye.'"

3

Lo! thus when he had said, I arose swiftly,
Doeing on my clothes in haste with agility.
Towardes the camp, wee went, of philosophi,
The wonderful sightes there for to see.
To a large greate gate, father tyme first brought me,
Which closed was; then he to me saide,
"Each thing his time hath; be thou nothing Dismaied."

4

The great admiracion I tooke into my selue,
With sore & huge perturbacions of minde,
Beholdinge the gate fastned with lockes twelue.
I fantasied but smalle that time should be my freind.
"Why studiest thou, man," quoth he; "art thou blind?"
With a rodd he touched me, whereat I Did Downe fall
Into a straunge sleepe, & In a Dreame he showed me all.

The Dreame of Mr Blomefeild

5

Audite somnium meum quod vidi.
The Mt yeere of Christ, D L & seuen,

In the month of march, asleep as I did lye,
Late in the night, of the clocke about eleuen,
In spiritu rapt I was, soodenly into heauen;
Where I saw sittinge in most glorious maiesty
Three beholding, I adored but one in deitye:

6

A Spirit incircumscript with burninge heate incombustible;
Light of brightnes permanent, as fountaine of all light;
Three knit in one, with glory incomprehensible,
Which to behold I had a greate Delighte.
This trulye [to attayne] surmounted my might;
But a voice from that glorious brightnes to me saide,
"I am one god of Immeasurable maiesty: [be not afraide]."

7

In this vision so cleare, that it selfe did so extend
With a voice most pleasant, being three & one,
Pearsed my minde, & taught me to comprehende
The darke sayinges of philosophers each one:
The altitude, latitude & profundity of the stone
To be three in substance & one in essence,
A most heauenly treasure procreate by quintessence.

8

The studied I what quintessence should be;
Of visible thinges apparant to the eye
The fifth being, even a straunge privity
In euery substance resting invisibly.
The invisible godheade is the same, thought I,
Prime cause of beinge & the prime essence,
And of this macrocosm the most suffren quintessence.

9

This is the heauenly and secret potencyall
That Devided is, & resteth indivisible
In [all] thinges animall, vigitall, & minerall;
Whose vertue in them, & strength, is invisible.
From god it cometh, & god maketh it sencible
To some preelect; to other doth it denay.

As I sate thus museinge, a voice to me did say:

10

"Study thou no more of my being, but stedfastly
Beleeue this trinity equally knit in one.
Further of my Secretes to muse is but folly,
Passing thy capassity, & all human reason."
The heauens closed vp againe in that season.
Then father Tyme set me at the gate,
And Deliuered me a key to enter in thereat:

11

The key of knowledge & excellent Science,
Whereby all secretes of philosophi are reserate:
The Secretes of nature sought out by Diligence,
Voidinge fables envious of fooles inveterate:
With recipe & Decipe, this science is violate.
Therefore [to me] this key he did Dispose,
The secretes of this art to open & Disclose.

12

This said father Tyme, this key when he mee tooke:
"Vnlock," quoth he, "this gate by thy selue."
And then vpon him sorrowfully Did I looke,
Saying that one key vndoe could not lockes twelue.
"Whose axe is sure," quoth he, "both the head & helue,
Hold will together till the tree Downe fall.
So open thou the first locke, & thou hast opened all."

13

"What is this first locke named, tell me then,
I Pray thee," said I, "and what shall I it call?"
"It is," quoth he, "the secret of all the wise men,
Chaos; in the bodies called the first originall,
Prima materia, our mercury, our menstruall,
Our vitrioll, our sulphur, our lunary most of price.
Put the key in the locke, & it will open with a trice.

14

Then the key of knowledge buysily I tooke in hand,
And began to search the hollownes of the locke;
The wardes thereof I scare did vnderstand,
So craftily conveid they were in their stocke.
I proued euery way; at the last I did vnlocke
The crafty ginnes thus made for the nonce,
And with it, the other lockes fell open all at once.

15

At this gate opening, euen in the entry
A number of philosophers in the face I mett,
Workeing all one way the secretes of philosophy
Vpon Chaos Darke, that amongst them was sett.
Sober men of liueing, peaceable & quiet,
They buysily Disputed de materia prima,
Reiecting cleane away simul stulta et friuola.

16

Heere I saw the father of philosophers, Hermes.
Heere I saw Aristotle with cheere most Iocunde.
Heere I saw Morien & Senior in turba more & lesse;
Geber, [Democritus], Albert, Bacon, & Ramond;
The monke, & the chanon of Bridleington so profound;
Workeing most soberly, who said vnto me:
"Beware though beleeue not all that thou dost see,

17

"But if thou wilt enter this camp of philosophy,
With thee take time to guide thee in the way;
For by pathes & broade waies, Deep vallyes & hils high
Here shalt thou finde with sightes pleasant & gay.
Some thou shalt finde which vnto thee shall say,
'Recipe this & that,' & with a thowsand thinges more
Decipe thy selfe & other[s] as they haue done before."

18

Then father Tyme & I by fauour of these men,
Such sightes to see, passed foorth toward the campe
Where wee met Disguised philosophers ten,
With porfiries & morters, ready to grind & stamp;

Their heades shakeing, their hands full of the cramp;
Some lame [with] spasums, some febull, wann, & blind,
With arsneck & sulphur, to this art most vnkind.

19

These were Broke the preste & yorke in cotes gay,
Which robbed king henry of a million of gold;
Martin pery, mayre, & thomas De Lahaye,
Saying that the king they greatly enrich would.
They wispered in his eare, & this tale him told:
"Wee will worke for your highnes the Elixer vite,
A princely worke called opus regale."

20

Then brought they in the vicar of Maldon
With his lyon greene, that most royall secret,
Richard record & little Master Edon
(Their mettals by corrosiue[s] to calcinate & fret);
Hugh oldcastle & Sir Robert greene with them mett,
Rosting & broileinge all thinges out of kinde,
Like philosophers left off with loss in the end.

21

Yet brought they [forth] thinges beautifull to sight,
Deluding the king thus from day to day;
With copper cytrinate for the red, and albefied [for] the white,
And with mercury rubified in a glass full gay.
But at the last, in the fire, it went away.
All this was because they neuer knew the verity
Of altitude, latitude, & profunditye.

22

Thence father Tyme brought me to a wildernes,
Into a thicket haueing by pathes many [a one].
Steps & footinges I saw there more & lesse,
Wherein the foresaid men had wandered & gone.
There I saw Marcasites, minerals, & many a stone,
As yrides, talke, & alom lay digged from the ground,
The mines of leade & Iron that they had out fownde.

23

No marvell I trow, though they were much set by,
That with so greate riches could [endue] a kinge.
So many sundry waies to fill vp his treasurie
With filthy matter, great charges in to bring:
The very next way a prince to bring to begginge,
And make a noble realme & common wealth decay.
These are royall philosophers the cleane contrary way.

24

From thence foorth I went, Tyme beinge my guide,
Through a greene wood where birdes sang clearly,
Tyll wee came to a feild, pleasant, large, & wide,
Which he said was called the camp of philosophy.
There downe we sate, to heere the sweete harmony
Of the diuers birdes in their sweete notes singinge,
And to receiue the flauour of the flowers springinge.

25

Heere Iuno, heere pallas, heere Apollo doe Dwell;
Heere true philosophers take their dwelling place.
Heere duly the muses nine drinck of pirenes well.
No bosting broyler heere the art can deface.
Heere lady philosophi hath her royall palace,
Holding her court in her high consistory,
Sitting with her councelers most famous of memory.

26

Thus one said vnto me (an ancient man was he),
Declareing [forth] the matter of the stone,
Saying that he was sent thither to comfort me,
And of his religion for to chuse me to be one.
A cloth of tyssew he had him vpon,
Verged aboute with pearles of collers fresh & gay.
He proceeded with his taile, & againe thus did say:

27

"Heere all occult secretes of Nature knowne are;
Heere all the elementes from thinges are drawne out.

Heere fire, air, & water in earth are knit together;
Heere all our secret worke is truly brought aboute.
Heere you must learne in thy busines to be stout:
Night & day thou must tend thy work buysily,
Haueing constant pacience & neuer to be weary."

28

As we sate talkeing by the riuers running cleere,
I cast my eye aside, & there I did behold
A lady most excellent, sitting in her arbor,
Which clothed was in a robe of fine gold,
Set about with stones & pearles many fold.
Then asked I father Tyme what hee should be.
"Lady philosophy," quoth he, "most excellent of beauty."

29

Then I was stricken with an ardent avidity
The place to approche to, where I saw that sight.
I rose vp to walk, & the other two went before me
Against the arbor, till I came foorth right.
Then we all three, humbly as we might,
Bowed down our selues to her with humility,
With greate admiracion extolling her felicity.

30
Shee shewed her selue both gentill & benigne:
Her gesture & countenace gladdid our cominge.
From her seate imperiall, shee did her selfe incline,
As a lady loueing perfect wisedome & cunninge.
Her goodly poems her beauty was surmountinge:
Her speech was decorate with such auriate sentence,
Far above excelling famous tullye's eloquence.

31
The father tyme vnto the Lady saide,
"Pleaseth your highnes this poore man to heere,
Him to assist with your most gracious aide?"
Then she commanded him with me to draw neere.
"Son," said the lady, "be thou of good cheere.
Admitted thou shalt be amongst greate & smale,
A disciple to be of my secretes all."

32
Then she committed me vnto Ramon Lully,
Commanding him my simplenes to instructe,
And in her secretes to induce me fully:
Into her priuy garden, for to be my conducte.
First into a towre, most beautifull constructe,
Father Ramond brought me, & thence immediately
He led me to her garden, planted most deliciously.

33

Among the faire trees, one tree in especiall,
Most vernant & pleasant, appeared to my sight.
A name inscribed, "the tree philosophical,"
Which to behold I had great delight.
Then to philosophy my troth I plight,
Her maiesty to serue, & to take greate paine,
The fruites of that tree with Ramond to attaine.

34

Then Raymonde shewed me budes fiftene
Spring of the tree, & fruites fiftene mo.
"Of the which," said he, "proceedeth that wee doe mean,
That all philosophers couet to attaine to,
The blessed stone, one in number & no mo:
Our great Elixer most high of price,
Our azoc, our Adrope, our basilicke, our cockatrice.

35

"This is our antimony & our red leade,
Gloriously shineing as Phebus at midday.
This is our crowne of glory & Diadem of our head
Whose beames resplendent shall neuer fade away.
Who attaineth this treasure never can decay:
It is a Iewell so abundant & excellent,
That one graine will endure euer to be permanent.

36

"I leave thee heere now, our secretes to attaine.
Look that thou earnestly my counsell doe ensue:
There needes no blowing at the cole be, nore paine,

But at thine owne ease here maist thou continue.
Old, Ancient writers beleeue which are true,
And they shall thee learne to pass it to bringe.
Beware therefore of many, & hold thee to one thinge.

37

"This one thing is nought els but the lyon greene,
[Which] some fooles imagine to be vitrioll roman.
It is not that thing that the philosophers meane,
For nothing to vs any corosiue doe pertaine.
Vnderstand, therefore, or else thy hand refraine
From this hard science, lest you doe worke amiss.
For I will tell the truth; marke now what it is:

38

"Greene of collor our lyon is not truly,
But vernant & greene, euermore endurringe.
In his most bitternes of death, he is liuely;
In the burning fire he is euermore springinge.
Therefore the Salamander, by the fire liueing,
Some men doth him call, & some another name:
The mettalline menstruall, it is euen the same.

39

"Some call it allso a substance exuberate.
Some call it mercury of mettalline essence;
Some, limus deserti, from his body evacuate;
Some, the eagle flyinge from the north with violence.
Some call it a tode for his great vehemence.
But few or none at all doe name it in his kind:
It is a priuy quintessence; keepe it well in minde.

40

"This is not in sight, but resteth invisible
Tyll he be forced out of Chaos darke,
Wher he remaineth euer indiuisible.
And yet in him is foundacion of our worke;
In our lead it is, so that thou it marke:
Dryue it out of him, so out of all other.
I can tell thee no better if thou were my brother.

41

"This Chaos Darke the mettals I doe call,
Because as in a prison it resteth them within.
The secret of nature they keepe in thrall
Which by a meane wee doe out twine;
The workeing whereof the easlier to begin,
Lift vp thy head and looke vpon the heauen,
And I will learn thee truly to know the planetes seven.

finis primi libri

The Second Booke concerninge the 7 planetes

42

"Saturne malivolous, to this art hath respect,
Of whom wee draw a quintessence excellent.
Vnto our mastery him selfe he doth converte,
Vnited in quality, & allso made equipolent
In strength & vertue. Who lust to be diligent
Shall find that wee seeke an heavenly treasure,
And a precious Iewell that euer shall endure.

43

"Iubiter the gentill, indewed with azure blew,
Examinate by iustice, Declareth true Iudgment;
Altering his colour euer fresh & new,
In his occult nature to this art is convenient;
To philosophi is seruiable & allso obedient,
Ioyned with lunary after his owne kinde
Conteneth this art & leaueth nothing behinde.

44

"Mars that is martiall in citty and in towne,
Ferce in battle, full of debate & strife,
A noble warryour & famous of renowne,
With fire & sword defendeth his owne life.
He stayneth with blood, & slayeth with a knife

All spirites & bodies, his artes bee so bold.
The hartes of all other he winneth with gold.

45

"The Sonn most gloriously shininge is prepotent
Aboue all the other faire planetes seven;
Shedding his light to them all indifferent.
WIth his golden beames & glistering stevyn,
He lighteneth the earth & the firmament of heaven.
Who can him Dissolue, & draw out his quintessence,
Vnto all other planetes he shall giue influence.

46

"Lady venus, of loue the fayre goddesse,
With her Sonn cupid appertaineth to this art.
To the loue of the sonn when she Doth her dresse,
With her dart of loue striketh him to the hart.
Ioyned to his seede, of his substance she taketh part.
Her selue she endeweth with excellent tissew,
Her corrupt nature [when she doth renewe].

47

"Mercury this seeing, beginneth to be fugitiue.
With his rod of enchantment little Doth prevaile:
Taken often prisoner, himselfe doth reviue,
Till he be snarled with the Dragon's taile;
Then Doth he on an hard coate of maile,
Sodered together with the Sunn & the moone:
Then he is mastered & his enchantment Done.

48

"The moone, that is called the lesser [luminarie],
Wife to phebus, shining by night
To other giueth her garment; through her orbe lunary
From the north to the south shineth full bright.
If ye for her doe seeke, shee hideth from your sight,
But by fair entreaty she is wonn at the last:
With azoc & fire, the whole mastery thou hast.

49

"The mastery thou gettest not of these planetes seven,
But by a misty meaninge, known onely vnto vs.
Bring them first to hell & afterward to heauen;
Betwixt life & Death them you must Discus.
Therefore I counsaile thee, see that you worke thus:
Solue & seperate them, sublyme, fix, & congeale;
Then hast thou all, therefore doe as I thee tell.

50

"Dissolue not with corosiue nor vse seperation
With vehemence of fire, as multipliers doe vse;
Nor to the glas topp make you sublimacion.
Such waies inordinate, philosophers refuse.
Their sayinges follow & wisely them pervse;
Then shalt thou not thy selfe ludely Delude
In this godly science. Adew; thus I conclude."

per me Wll. Blomefild

Incipit theorica per Wll Blomefild

51

[We] intend now, through grace Devine,
In few wordes of Chaos to write;
Light from darknes to cause foorth to shine,
Long before hidden, as I shall recyte.
In euery thing vnknown, it is requisite
A secret to search out which is invisible,
Materiall of our mastery, a substance invincible.

52

Because I should not seeme to [disclose]
Long hidden treasure vnto me committed
Of my lord god, therefore plaine of Chaos
My purpose shalbe there of to be acquited.
For Daungerous burdens are not easily lighted.
In faith, therefore, my selfe I shall endeuor
Lightly to Discharge me, before god for euer.

53

Devoutly, therefore, o lord vnto thee I call:
Send me thy grace to make explanacion
Of Chaos. For thou art opener of secretes all,
Which euer art ready to heare the exclamacion
Of thy meeke servantes, which with harty humiliacion
To thee doe apply: send me now thy grace,
Of thy secretes to write in due order, time, & place.

54

Chaos is no more to say (this is doubtelesse,
As Ovid witnesseth in his metamorphosyn)
But a certaine rude substance, indigestaque moles,
Haueing diuers natures resting it within,
Which with the contrarie, wee may out twine
By philosopher's arte. Who so the feate doth know,
The fower elementes from Chaos can out [drawe].

55

This Chaos, as all thinges, hath Dimencions three,
Which well considered shall follow the effect:
That is, altitude, latitude, & profunditye,
By the which three all the matter is [detect].
Vnto these dimencions who hath not a respect
Shall neuer Devide this Chaos in his kinde,
But after his labour, shall find fraud in the end.

56

Chaos is to us the vine tree, white & red.
Chaos is each beest, fowle, & fish in his kinde.
Chaos is the ore & mine of tinn & leade,
Of gold and siluer that we doe out finde,
Iron & Copper, which thinges doe binde
And hold our sight & wittes to them bounde;
The secret hidd in them, that wee ne vnderstand.

57

[Out of this mistie] Chaos, the philosophers expert

Do a substance out draw, called a quintessence,
Craftely deviding the fower elementes by art,
With greate wisedome, study, & dilegence.
The which high secret hath a diuine influence
That is supernaturall (of fooles thought impossible),
An oyle or much like, called incombustible.

58

The mastery of this plainly to shew thee,
In forme here after I will it Declare,
Setting foorth heere the philosopher's tree,
Wherein the whole art now I shall compare.
In this faire tree [sixteene] fruites are,
More pretious then gold in thy stomacke to digest.
Put thy hand therto, & taste of the best.

59

And leste the fault should imputed be
In me or in other that of this art do write,
I set before thee the true figure of the tree,
Wherein orderly this art I will recyte.
Vnderstand my sentence that thou maist worke right,
Considering as I said that Chaos is all thing
That we begin of, the true way of workinge.

60

Put case thy Chaos be animall, vigetall, or minerall;
Let reason guide thee to worke after the same.
If thou workest out of kind, then loosest thou all;
For nature with nature ioyeth & maketh true game.
Worke animall with his kind, & keep thee out of blame;
Vigetall & minerall in their order Dew,
Then shalt thou be taken for a philosopher trew.

61

When thou hast fownde what it is indeede,
Then knowest thou thy forme, what by reason it must be.
Search it wittyly & Draw from him his seede.
There is then thy altitude superficiall to see;
The latitude anon shall appeare: beleeue mee.

When thou hast Deuided the elementes asunder,
Then the profundity amongest them [lyeth] hid vnder.

62

Here is materia prima et corpus confusum,
But not yet the matter which philosophers Doe treate.
Yet the one conteineth the other in somme,
For forma, materia, [et] corpus together are knite.
With the menstruall water thou must them frett,
That the body first be finely calcinate,
After dissolued & purely euacuate.

63

Then is he the trew mercury of philosophers,
Vnto the mastry apt, needful, & serviable.
More of this thing I need not much rehearse,
For this is all the secret most commendable.
Materia prima it is called multiplicable,
The which by art must be exuberate:
Then is it the matter that mettals were of generate.

64

Sulphur of nature, & not that which is common,
Of mettals must be made if that thou wilt speede;
Which will turn [them] to his kind euery each one.
His tincture into them abroad he will spreade.
It will fix mercury common at thy neede,
And make him apt, true tincture to receiue.
Worke as I haue told thee, & it shall not thee deceiue.

65

Then of Sunn & moone make your oile incombustible
With mercury vegitable or els with lunary.
Incerate therewith, & make thy sulphur possible
To abide the fire, & allso thy mercury
Be fixt & flowinge. Then hast thou wrought truly,
And so hast thou made a worke for the nonce,
And gotten a precious stone of all stones.

66

Fix it vp now with perfect Decoction,
And that with easy fire & not vehement,
For fear of induracion or vitrificacion,
Lest you loose all & thy labour be mispent.
With eight Daies & nightes this stone is sufficient:
The greate Elixer, most high of price,
Which Ramond calleth his basilicke & cockatrise.

67

To this excellent worke greate cost neede not to be:
Many glasses or pots about it to breake.
One glas, one furnace, & no mo of necessity;
Who mo doth spoile, his wittes are but weake.
All this is stilled in a limbecke with a beacke
(As touching the order of distillacions),
And with a blind head in the same for solucions.

68

In this thy mercury taketh his true kinde.
In this he is brought to multiplication.
In this made he is Sulphur: beare it in mind.
Tincture here in he taketh, & inceration.
In this the stone is brought to his perfect creacion,
In one glas, one thing, one fire, & no moe.
This worke is complete: Da gloriam deo.

finis theorica per Wll. B.

Incipit Practica: per Wll. Blomefild

69

Wee haue declared sufficiently the theoricke,
In wordes misticall makeing Declaration.
Let vs now proceede plaine with the practicke,
Largely of the matter to make explanacion.
I will, therefore, that thou marke well my narracion,
As true disciples my doctrine ye attend:
My testament & last will to you I doe commend.

70

Be you holy, therefore, sober, honest, & meeke.
Loue god & your neighbor; to the poore be not vnkinde.
Ouercome sathan; god's glory see you seeke.
My sonn, be gentle to all men, as a freind;
Fatherles & widdowes haue euer in thy minde.
Innocentes loue as brothers; the wicked Doe eschew.
Let falsehood & flattery goe, lest that thou it rew.

71

Devoutely serue god, call Daily for his grace.
Worship him in spirrit, with hart contryte & pure;
In no wise let sathan thy prayers deface.
Looke thou be stedfast in faith & trust most sure.
Long sufference & patience with thee let long endure;
In all aduersitye be gentle in thy hart
Against thy foe: so shalt thou him convert.

72

Most hartily therefore, o lord, to thee I call,
Beseeching thee to ayd me with thy heauenly grace.
Louingly thy spirit vpon me let Down fall,
Ouershadowing me that I at no tyme trespas.
My lord & my god, graunt me to purchase
Full knowledge of thy secretes, with thy mercy to winn.
Intending the truth, this practice I beginn.

73

Listen now, my Sonn, & thy eares encline.
Delight haue thou to learne this practice, sage and true.
Attend my sayinges & note well this Discipline,
These rules following: Doe as [it] doth ensue:
This labor once begun, thou must it Continue
Without teadious sluggerdy & slothfull wearynes;
So shalt thou thereby acquire to thee right riches.

74

In the name of God, this secret to attaine,

Ioyne thou in one body with a perfect vnity
First the red man & the white woman, these twaine.
One of the man's substance, & of the woman's three;
By liquifaction together ioyned they must be:
The which coniunction is called Diptatyue,
That is made betweene man & wife.

75

Then after that they be one body made,
With the sharp teeth of a Dragon finely
Bring them to dust. The next must be had:
The true proportion of that dust truly
In a true ballance, waying it equally
With three times as much of the firy dragon fell,
Mixing all together: then hast thou done well.

76

Thy substance together thus proporcionate,
Put into a bed of glas with a bottome large & round,
There in due time to dye, & be regenerate
Into a new nature: three natures in one bound.
Then be thou glad that euer thou it found,
For this is the Iewell that shall stand thee most in stead,
The crowne of glory & diademe of thy head.

77

When thou hast thus mixed thy matter as is said,
Stop well thy glas, that the dragon goe not owt;
For he is so subtill that if he be ouerlayde
With fyre vnnaturall (I put thee owt of dowbte),
For to escape he wyll search all abowte.
Therefore with gentyll fyre, looke that thou kepe [it] in:
So shalt thou of him the whole maistry wynne.

78

The whole maistery here of, Duly to fullfill,
Set thy glas & matter vpon the athanor,
One furnace called the philosopher's Dunghill.
With a temperate heate workeing euermore,
Night & day continually haue fuell in store,

Or turfe, or saw Dust, or dry chipped segges,
That the heate be equipolent to the henn vpon her eggs.

79

Such heate continuall, looke that it doth not lacke.
Forty Dayes long for their perfect vnition
In them is made, for first it turneth blacke.
This colour betokeneth the right putrifaction.
This is the beginning of perfect conception
Of your infant into a new generacion:
A most precious Iewell for our great consolation.

80

Forty dayes then more, thy matter shall turne white
And cleere as pearles, which is a declaracion
Of voideing away of his cloudes, darke, & night.
This sheweth our infante's organisacion,
Our white elixer, most cleere in his carnacion.
From white vnto all coloures without faile,
Like to the rainbow or to the peacocke's taile.

81

So foorth augment thy fire continually;
Vnder thy matter easely they must be fedd.
Till those colours begon, rule it wisely;
For soone after appeareth yellow, the [messenger] to red.
When that is come, then hast thou well sped,
And hast brought forth a stone of price,
Which raymond calleth his basylicke & cockatrice.

82

Then forty Daies to take his whole fixation:
Let it so stand in heate most temperate,
That in that time you spare the firmentation
To encrease him withall. That it be not violate,
Beware of fire & water, for that will it suffocate.
Take one to an hundreth vnto this confection,
And vpon crude mercury make thy proiection.

83

One of the stone, I meane, vpon an hundreth fold
(After the first & second right fermentation)
Of mercury crude, turneth it to fine gold:
As fine & as good, as naturall in ponderacion
(The stone is so vehement in his penetracion);
Fixt & fusible, as the goldsmithe's sowder is.
Worke as I haue said, & you cannot Doe amisse.

84

Now giue thankes to the blessed trinity
For the benefit of this pretious stone,
That with his grace so much hath lightened thee,
Him for to know, being three [in] one.
Hold vp thy handes to his heauenly throne;
To his maiesty let vs sing hosanna:
Altissimo Deo sit honor et gloria.

The practise of Mary the Prophetess in the Alchymicall Art

Aros the Philosopher had a meeting with Mary the Prophetess the Sister of Moyses, and approaching to her, he paid her respect and said unto her. O Prophetess, I have truly heard many say of you that you whiten the Stone in one day.
And Mary said, Yea, Aros, even in a part of one day.
Aros said: O Lady Mary, when will the Work be which you affirm? How shall we whiten and afterwards add blackness?
Mary said; O Aros, oftentimes Nations have dyd about this part. Know you not, O Aros; that there is a water or a thing which whitens Hendragem?
Then Aros answering said to her. O Lady it is so as you say, but in a long time.
Mary answered, Hermes in all his Books has said that the Philosophers whiten the Stone in one hour of the day.
Aros said to her, Oh how excellent is that?
Mary said, it is most excellent to him that is ignorant of it.
Aros said, if men have all the four Elements, he [Hermes] said that their fumes might be compleated, and complexioned, and coagulated, and retained in one day, untill they doe fullfill the consequence (i.e. attain the end).
Mary said, O Aros, by God, if thy senses or understanding were not solid, you should not hear these words from me, untill the Lord should fill my Heart with the grace of his divine Will. Nevertheless take the Allum of Spain, the white gumm and the red gumm, which is the Kibric of the Philosophers, and their Sol and the greater Tincture, and marry Gumm with Gumm togeather with a true Matrimony. Mary said, make them like a running Water, and

vitrify this water which has been laboured or wrought upon for one day, out of the two Lubechs, upon the fixed body, and liquefy them by the secret of Nature in the Vessel of Philosophy. Did you understand us?
Yes Lady.
Mary said, Keep the fume and take care that none of it fly away. And let your measure be with a gentle fire such as is the Measure of the heat of the Sun in the Month of June or July, and stay by your Vessel and behold it with care how it grows black, grows red, and grows white in less than three hours of the day, and the fume will penetrate the body, and the Spirit will be bound up, and they will be like milk, incerating, and liquefying and penetrating: and that is the secret.
Aros said I do not say that this will be allways.
Mary said unto him: Aros, and this is more wonderfull concerning this, that it was not among the Ancients, nor did it come to him by curing, or by the Medicinall Art and that is take the white, clear and honoured Herb growing on the Hillocks, and pound it fresh as it is in its Hour, and that is the true Body not flying from the Fire.
And Aros said it is the Stone of Truth?
And Mary said yes. But yet men know not this regimen (rule or way of working) with the speediness thereof.
Aros said, and what afterwards.
Mary said, vitrify upon it Kibric or Zibeic and there are the two fumes comprehending the two Lights, and project upon that the complement of the Tinctures of the Spirits, and the weights of Truth, and pound it all, and put it to the Fire, and you shall see wonderfull things from them. The whole goverment consists in the temper of the Fire, O how strange it is, how it will be moved from one colour to another, in less than an hour of the Day, untill it arrive at the mark of redness and whiteness, and cast away the Fire and permit it to cool, and open it and you will find the clear pearly Body to be of the Colour of the Poppy of the Wood mixt with whiteness and that is it which is incerating, liquefying and penetrating, and one golden piece thereof, the weight of a small golden Coin, falleth upon a thousand thousand and two hundred thousand. That is the hidden secret.
Then Aros fell down upon his face.
And Mary said to him, Lift up your head Aros: because I will shorten for you the thing, as that clear body which is thrown upon the Hillocks, and is not obtained by putrefaction or motion. Take and pound it with Gumm Elsaron, and with the two fumes because the Body comprehending or retaining them is Gumm Elsaron and grind it all. Therefore approach because it all melts. If you project its wife upon it, it will be as a distilling Water, and when the Aire shall strike it, it will be congealed and be one body, and make projection of it, and you will behold Wonders: O Aros that is the hidden secret of Scholia; and know that the said two fumes are the Root of this Art, and they are the white Kibric and the humid calx, but the fixed Body is of the Heart of Saturn comprehending the Tincture, and the Fields of Wisdom or of Scholia. And the Philosophers have named it by many and all names, and received or gathered from the Hillocks it is a clear white Body, and these are the medicine of this Art, part is procured and part is found upon the Hillocks; and know Aros that the wise men have not called it the Fields of Wisdom, or of Scholia, unless because Scholia will not be compleated but by it; and in the Scholia there are nothing but wonderfull things. For there

also enters into them the four Stones, and its true regimen is as I have said. And that is first Scoyare, Ade, and Zethet; by that make your Allegory as Hermes has done in his Books Scoyas, and the Philosophers have allways made the regimen longer, and have resembled the work to every thing which ought not to make the work, and they make the Magistery to be in one year, and this but onely for hiding it from the ignorant people, untill it be confirmed in their Hearts and their senses (till they believe the Art),: because the Art will not be compleated except only in Gold; because it is the great secret of God: and they who hear of our secrets doe not verify them (nor believe them to be true), by reason of their ignorance.
Did you understand Aros?
Aros said yes. But tell me about that vessel, without which the Work will not be accomplisht.
Mary said that the Vessel of Hermes which the Stoicks have concealed, and it is not a Necromanticall Vessel, but it is the Measure of your Fire.
Aros said: O Lady you have obeyed (been a scholar) in the Society of Scoyari: O Prophetess, have you found among the Secrets of the Philosophers, which they have set down in their Books, that any one can make the Art out of one Body?
And Mary said: Yes: which Hermes has not taught, because the Root of Scholia is a body which cannot be made smooth or plain and incurable (unconquerable) and it is a poyson mortifying all bodies, and it pulverises them and coagulates Mercury with its odour. And shee said, I swear to you by the eternall God, that that poison when it is dissolved untill it is made a subtile Water, I care not by what dissolution it is done, does coagulate Mercury into Luna with the strength of Truth, and it falls into the Throne of Jupiter, and forms him into Luna. And the Science is in all Bodys, but the Stoicks, by reason of the shortness of their lives, and the Length of the Work, have concealed this; and they found out these tinging Elements, and they increased them, and all the Philosophers teach them, except the Vessel of Hermes, because it is divine, and of the Wisdom of the Lord hidden from Nations: and they who are ignorant of it, know not the Regimen of Truth, because of their Ignorance of the Vessel of Hermes.

Mary briefly soundeth forth
Strange things like Thunder round the Earth.
She with two Gumms makes the Bottome stay
What else would fly away.
Three things if you three hours attend
Are chained together in the End.
Mary the Light of dew, and Art has got
In three hours to tye the Knot.
Pluto's daughter, it is she
Who bindeth Loves confederacy
Joyned with three seeds she does aspire
To be exalted in the Fire.

An Alchemical poem by Thomas Rawlin

All Things from One, and to One.
In the Center Truth, in the Circumference Vanity.

A Magicall Ænigma.

The omnipotent God in the rotten Mass.
(as it were in a Chaos) to be despised,
To us Mortalls has left all things,
Yet they in the Nature of Things are but one.
It is a Mass of Dust, a despicable Thing;
A Fire, an Aquosity; a most amiable Fountain;
It is neither a Stout Captain, nor invincible;
When it is not drawn out of its Cradle.
It is an old Man; it is an Infant; the Lord of all;
It is the red Servant, contrary to the King;
It is the green Lyon; something more sublime
Than the King, or Subjects; but fugitive.
It flys, and attracts; the Virgin obeyeth not,
Unless the Father provoke her with Many Goads;
Then she follows, and much demands
A Husbands company, with whom she cohabits.
She is covered and impregnated with the Embrace,
A clear Water is evacuated out of her Heart
With Blood, wherewith she is raised up
Now dying as it were, and is recreated.
Things bright and clear being so obtained
The King and Queen being begot togeathere
Being put presently in the Secret Prison,
Feed them with heavenly Dew; not Watry things.
Being Dead at length, the Spirit flys away
Washes and purifys the Soul and the Body
Then a more intense Fire allway perpetuats
With a cold Fire; it volatilizes not.
Now no Errour follows in the Work,
Burn all with a very strong Fire,
Bring out at length the Blood, the Soul
After the White King: Then thrice imbibe.
(The King being thus known) the Body is the Soul,
And fixt, and permanent, although like Wax;
The Colour is not an Accident; but a Substance
Reigning in all, with the highest Glory.

Glory to God alone, the three-one.

Summary of the Rosary of Arnold de Villa Nova

We have learned all that Bonus could tell us about the first principles of metals and their generation. We will now proceed to consider, practically and theoretically, the composition of our Stone, since practice and theory are mutually helpful: practice is informed by theory, and theory is corrected and checked by practice. Now, as Arnold de Villa Nova has, in his Rosary, given us a practical treatise on the Philosophers' Stone, I will arrange some of his remarks in chapters according to the following plan:

Chapter the First shows that there is one Philosophers' Stone, because there is one essence, and one method, both in the red and white Medicine. The red Medicine is merely a further development of the white.
Chapter the Second shows whence is the Stone extracted. Observe well the answer.
Chapter the Third shows the chief difficulty of our work to be the discovery of the first matter of metals.
Chapter the Fourth shows our first physical object must be to dissolve the Stone into its Mercury, or primal matter of all metals. Hence the philosopher says that we must first be at pains to dissolve and sublime the two luminaries, because the primal grade of operation in Our Art is to reduce them to quicksilver. Unless the bodies lose their corporeal nature, and become spiritual, we shall make no progress with our work. The solution of a body takes place through the operation of the spirit, and is attended with the coagulation of the spirit. Then the body mingles with the spirit, and the spirit with the body.
Chapter the Fifth shows the four principal methods in this Magistery: Dissolution, Purification, Reduction, Fixation. To dissolve is to make the gross subtle; to purify is to make the dark bright; reduction is of the humid into the dry; fixation is by resolution and coagulation of the spirit into its own body, or solid substance.
Chapter the Sixth shows the dissolution of the Stone, and its inhumation, which are the first regimen. Dissolution is brought about by purified Mercury. This is done in order that we may have sulphur and Mercury of that matter whereof gold and silver are developed beneath the earth.
Chapter the Seventh shows the second regimen: Ablution and purification of the black, corrupt, fetid matter, so that it may become exceeding bright, clear, and spotless - which ablution is performed by division of the Stone into its four elements and the cleansing of each element.

Arnold tells us truly that all metals are generated from quicksilver and sulphur, which coagulate the quicksilver by means of its heat or vapour; since every dry element naturally drinks up its humid element. Quicksilver in its essence is a compound of very subtle, white, sulphureous earth, with bright water, so as to make up one substance, which finds no rest

upon a plane surface.
It is homogeneous in nature, and is either wholly fixed, or else wholly evaporates in the fire. By constant sublimation it is purified, digested, and thickened, and so gradually coagulated into white and red sulphur. This process of constant dissolution and coagulation is performed by Nature in not less than a thousand years; but Art, through the mediation of Nature, accomplishes it in a very short time. If, then, we would prepare the medicine, we must both accelerate and imitate Nature.
Quicksilver is the matter and element of all metals alike; all of them when melted are converted thereto, and it also combines with them; at the same time, in some it is more and in some less pure, on account of its corruptive external sulphur. But quicksilver is coagulated by virtue of its own inward, non-combustive sulphur. The philosopher tells us that white, incombustible sulphur congeals mercury, and is the best thing that can possibly be used for conversion of mercury into good silver. If the sulphur be pure, good, but, on the other hand, of a red brilliancy, containing the gentle heat without the combustive violence of natural sulphur, it is the best thing that can possibly be used for converting Mercury into the Sun.
The result of good quicksilver and impure combustive sulphur is copper. Porous, impure quicksilver and impure sulphur produce iron. Tin has good, pure quicksilver but its sulphur is bad and ill mixed. Lead has gross, bad, ponderous, and earthy quicksilver, and bad, fetid, and feeble sulphur. So, at least, Aristotle tells us.
The common outward sulphur, then, is the cause of the imperfection of metals. There are two kinds of sulphur in every metal except gold, the outward combustive and the inward non-combustive, which belongs to the substantial composition of the quicksilver. The outward sulphur is separable, and is removed by calcination; the internal sulphur is inseparable from the quicksilver by calcination in fire. The latter the quicksilver retains, nor can it ever be taken away, as being homogeneous with it: the former it spurns and rejects, and exposes to the action of the fire, which consumes it. It is the property of this external sulphur, always either to be burned in the fire, or in its composition with quicksilver to burn, corrupt, and denigrate. It is quicksilver, then, which perfects bodies, and saves them from combustion, because the more bodies are of the nature of quicksilver, the less are they liable to combustion. And as quicksilver prevents combustion, so it is the cause of metallic fusibility, and it is that by means of which the tincture pervades the metals, since it receives the homogeneous tinctural influence in all its smallest parts. Quicksilver adheres most readily to quicksilver, then to gold, then to silver, because these two metals are most homogeneous to it. It is not so with the other metals, till they are purged of their corruptive sulphur.
Those are, then, the most perfect bodies which contain the largest proportion of quicksilver, while those which contain less are less perfect. It contains in itself its own good sulphur, by means of which it is coagulated into gold and silver, but by different methods of digestion. If the sulphur be white, it will digest the quicksilver into silver; if, on the other hand, it shew a red brilliancy, and have a noble but not destructive fire, it will coagulate the quicksilver into gold, and the elixir of gold is composed from it. Observe that both white and red sulphur are in reality the same metallic matter; but they are more and less powerful because of the different degree of their digestion. Hence the philosopher says that all gold has red sulphur, and all silver white sulphur. But this sulphur is not found upon the earth, as Avicenna assures us, otherwise than in these two; hence we most subtly prepare these bodies, that we may have

red sulphur and quicksilver of the same matter on the earth of which gold and silver are made under the earth: for these are lucent bodies, whose rays tinge other bodies with true white and red. Thus the red tincture is obtained from gold, and the white tincture from silver.

Chapter I.
Showing that there is but one Philosophers' Stone.

Arnold de Villa Nova says that there is but one Philosophers' Stone, and there is but one Medicine, to which nothing foreign is added, and from which nothing is removed, except that which is foreign to it. Its external sulphur of vulgar quicksilver is foreign to it; its inward sulphur belongs to its own nature, and into this it must be converted by our magistery. Do not introduce into it, then, any powder, or water, or any other foreign substance, because no heterogeneous material can possibly enter into its composition. If any foreign matter be added to it, it is straightway corrupted, and does not become what you desire. The Stone itself, in order that it may enter the common-metals, must attain a
state of great fixation and subtleness, that it may become a medicine for corrupt bodies.

Chapter II.
Whence the Physical Stone is extracted.

Our physical Stone, or Medicine, may be obtained from all metals; but it is found in the highest perfection in gold and silver. Without the Sun and its shadow, the Moon, we can have no tinging quicksilver, and he is foolish who attempts to accomplish our Magistery in their absence. On the other hand he who knows how to tinge quicksilver with the Sun and Moon is in possession of our arcanum which may become red sulphur, but at first is called white sulphur. Gold is the father, and silver the mother of the proximate substance of our Stone, for out of these bodies, prepared with their sulphur or arsenic, is our medicine elicited. It may, indeed, be possible to derive it from other bodies, but it is found nearer to the hand, and more easily, in quicksilver, which is the father of those lights and the root of all metals. Of this were they all made, and into the same all of them return. That which is now our Stone is not quicksilver, but once formed part of it, and it is this which imparts to it its brightness, preserves it from combustion, and is the cause of its perfection. Do not work with anything except Mercury and the Sun for the Sun, and Mercury and the Moon for the Moon.

Chapter III.
It is impossible for the Stone to be perfected by the substance of metals only.

As water cannot rise above the level of its spring, so the wonderful Tincture, which is to transmute all common metals into gold and silver, cannot possibly be perfected out of the substance of metals only, not even of gold and silver. The elixir must be far more purified and digested than these. If gold and silver gave of their perfection to other metals, they themselves would become imperfect. The tincture which is to impart perfection to all other metallic bodies must itself possess a superabundance of digestive perfection and matured excellence. Most of our Alchemists leave off with the substance with which they ought to have begun, and consequently nothing comes of their projection.

Chapter IV.
Of the first Operation of our Magistery.

Our first business, according to Arnold, must be to dissolve our Stone into its Mercury or first matter. Species can be transmuted only by the reduction of their matter to the generic First Matter. Hence we must reduce our Stone to quicksilver. By the projection of our Tincture, the species, or properties of the species, are not changed, but only individual quantities of metal belonging to the species. Silver as a metallic species is never changed into gold, which has immediately its own species, but individuals of this or another metallic species may well so change. Your first step, then, must be to bring about the dissolution of gold and silver into quicksilver. Hence the Sages say: Unless the bodies become incorporeal, and the spirits corporeal, no progress will be made. The true beginning, then, of our work is the solution of our body, because bodies, when dissolved, become spiritual in their nature, and are yet at the same time more fixed than the spirit, though they are dissolved with it. For the solution of the body means the coagulation of the spirit, and vice versa; each gives up something of its own nature: they meet each other half-way, and thus become one inseparable substance, like water mixed with water.

Chapter V.
On the Perfect Investigation of the Physical Stone.

It is clear, then, that the operation of our Stone is the operation of Nature. As ice is water because it is dissolved into water, so our Stone, which is dissolved into quicksilver, is thereby proved to be quicksilver. Our operation is a conversion of the elements, an amicable conjunction of the humid with the dry, and of the cold with the hot. But the dry becomes humid, and the cold becomes hot, only by means of an intermediate substance. If, then, the dry be converted into the cold, and the cold into the humid, and the humid into the hot, and the hot into the dry, then you have the whole Magistery. The four stages of our work, then, are solution, purification, reduction, and fixation, the significance of which terms has already been explained. Solution is of the gross into the subtle; purification is of the dark into the bright; reduction is of the humid into the dry; fixation is of the volatile over its own body. Let the Stone, therefore, be dissolved with best Mercury, purged from its terrestrial and humid nature, by means of sublimation, and afterwards reduced. With this let it be twice pounded, and then placed in the Balneum Mariae

How Mercury is Cleansed.

Sublime your Mercury once or twice with vitriol and salt, till its substance is very white and brilliant. When it is in a volatile state, plunge it into boiling water, till it once more becomes quicksilver; remove the water, and proceed to use it for our Magistery. Pound it, soak it in its own water, and digest it in S. Mary's bath; distil it through a filter. Watch for a black oil appearing on the surface, which is the true sign of the dissolution being completed. Watch it well, I repeat, lest it evaporate into smoke, and what you do with the white, do also with the red. The difference between the Solar and the Lunar Medicine is this, that the Solar includes the Lunar, but the Lunar does not include the Solar, the Solar having in addition a reddish or golden colouring substance. Be patient and do not attempt to extract the Tincture in a hurry;

haste burns up, instead of maturing and digesting, our substance. Bear in mind that the chief error in this Art is haste, which ends in the combustion of everything. Much fire at the beginning is to the detriment of the tincture, and consumes the medicine.
Pound and cool; with patience, and reiterate the process again and again, because that which is soaked with water is softened. The more you pound the substance, the softer it will become, and the softer it becomes, the more the gross parts are subtilized, till perfect union of body and spirit supervenes. For by means of pounding and softening and digestion, the parts held together by the viscosity of the water in bodies are separated. Bodies that are dissolved, are reduced to the nature of spirits, and their union is thenceforward indissoluble, like that of water mixed with water: for Nature rejoices when the bridegroom is united to the bride. Things which cannot be dissolved are devoid of subtle or soft parts. I pray you, therefore, labour in the dissolution of the Stone, disintegrating the grosser parts that the gross may be rejected and the work performed with the subtle.

Chapter VI.
On the Inhumation of the Stone.

When the Stone is dissolved, expose the whole of it to gentle heat, for its better putrefaction and digestion, and for the consummation of the connubial rite, during the space of a month of the Sages, i.e., of thirty days, since the danger of combustion is removed by digestion and inhumation. Let all be boiled together over a gentle fire, till the whole substance resolves into its first matter, and becomes truly like quicksilver. The sign that the solution is complete, is a blackness which appears after a certain time, which also we denominate the Raven's Head. When the Stone is fully dissolved in S. Mary's Bath, it should be passed through a filter. The blackness is a sign that the process of volatilization is accomplished.

Recapitulation of the First Regimen.

Sublime the Mercury, and dissolve it; then subject the whole substance to coction, till it is reduced to its first nature, i.e., till we have sulphur and quicksilver, of the same matter which in mines is digested into gold and silver. And he that has this Magistery has an everlasting treasure.

Chapter VII.
The second Regimen, or that of Purification.

The second regimen of the Stone is its ablution, that is to say, the removal of all that is black, corrupt, and fetid in it, whereby it is rendered very brilliant, and clear, and pure. This is brought about by the division of the elements, the distillation of the waters, and the solution of the Stone, because there are two dry or stony, and two humid or watery elements. The dry elements are fire and earth, the aqueous are air and Water. Fire purifies water by distillation, and thus all the elements cleanse and become assimilated to each other. So is our Stone divided into four elements, that it may be the better subtilised, and cleansed from stains, and afterwards more firmly conjoined. But nothing ever was born, has grown, or is animated, except after putrefaction and digestion. If there be no putrefaction, there can be no melting and no solution, but if there be no solution, then nothing is accomplished.

Division of the Stone into four Elements.

Take the Stone in its putrefied state, cleanse it by the cleansing of the four elements, by distillation, by a light and equable fire. Take the water. Then increase the fire a little, till all the air is mixed with fire, and that which remains at the bottom, in a burnt state, is dry, black earth. The water is cleansed in the bath of S. Mary, but air and fire are distilled through the ashes, and the grosser parts of the earth remain below, while the more subtle parts are carried upward. Earth desiccates and fixes, water Purifies and cleanses. Air and fire tinge, and cause fluidity; hence it is necessary to have much water and air. The quantity of the Tincture will be in proportion to the quantity of air. Seek, therefore, my dearest, in all thy works to overcome Mercury in commixtion, that thou mayest have enough of air; and if thou art able to perfect this by itself, thou will be the explorer of the conquering potency which resides in the highest perfection of Nature. After this operation it is still necessary for the Medicine to be matured and nourished over the fire, as the child is nourished at the breast.

On the Ablution of Water.

When you have separated the elements of the Stone, cleanse them; cleanse the air and water by a sevenfold distillation. The fire and earth, on the other hand, must be well calcined. Distil the air and water separately, for the air is more precious than the water. The air tinges the earth, and infuses into it life and the sensible soul. Air and water must be guarded from excessive heat, or they will be dried up. This is brought about by inhumation. When the purification is complete, the whole substance is wonderfully white and brilliant. The sediment of the water in distillation must be carefully removed and set apart with the blackness of the earth, already mentioned. Set also apart the seven times distilled water, for the same is the medicine and the Water of Life which washes the Laton. As you do with the white water, so do also with the red; there is no difference between the two, except that one tinges white, and the other red.

On the Ablution of Air.

Separate the air from the fire by distillation, viz., through the ashes. That which is distilled is most pure air; that which remains at the bottom, is dry fire. The air is the oil and tincture, the gold and soul of the Sages, the ointment by means of which the whole Magistery is effected. Fire and air must be distilled together because they are of the same nature. If you mix the Stone with fire, it will be red, and have all the virtues of the Red Tincture.

How oil is extracted from all things.

Place over the body, whence you wish to extract oil, sufficient purified Mercury to cover it completely, that is, to the height of four inches, or better if more; then put it over a slow fire. The oil, or air, will soon begin to bubble up through the quicksilver. Collect it carefully, and, if necessary, that is, should the quicksilver begin to diminish, add more pure and warm quicksilver and continue the coction till all the oil has been obtained. This oil must then be purified by inhumation and sevenfold distillation through the alembic, till it be brilliantly white. It will float on the surface of our water. Set it apart, for it is the Oily Tincture, the

Golden Soul, and the Unguent of the Philosophers, which colours, tinges, fixes, and makes fluid. A thin plate of metal steeped into it, will be changed into silver if it be of the white, and into gold if it be of the red grade. But do not mix the oil of gold with the oil of silver, or the reverse; for each has its own special purpose, one to tinge white, and the other to tinge red.

Difference between Water and Oil.

Water only cleanses, oil tinges and colours. If you dip a rag in clean water, it will become cleaner than it was; but the water will evaporate. If you dip it in coloured oil, it will be saturated with the colour of the oil, and you will be able to remove this colour only by burning the whole rag. For oil is thicker and more intense, and yet, at the same time, lighter than water. Nevertheless, it is by means of water, and from water that we obtain this oil. The water is the spirit, which retains the oil, or soul, as the soul retains the body. Through the oil our coagulation is effected, because it retains the volatile substance. Sow the soul in white flaky earth, for it will retain it: since, when it has ascended from earth to heaven, and descended to, the earth, it will have received the strength of things above, and of things below.

The cleansing of Fire and Earth.

Collect the impure sediments obtained from the cleansing of the oil, and place them with the fire, since they are fire, and have blackness and redness which must be pounded with the first water, and gently burned till they become a dry powder, without and of the humidity of air. So, also, the sediment of water must be combined with earth, and thrice calcined till it becomes white and dry. Calcine fire with fire and earth with earth, till they are pure and free from blackness, what ascends from the fire is the red oil; what ascends from the earth is the white precious oil. Perform all these processes, and preserve each part carefully by itself.

The cause of Ablution according to Plato.

According to Plato, you should to the fullest extent of your ability effect the separation of the elements: cleanse water and air by distillation, and earth by heat and calcination, till nothing of the soul is left in the body i.e. when nothing more evaporates from it, if placed on a red-hot metallic plate. In no part of our operation do we need any water but our white water, nor any oil but our white or orange-coloured oil, nor any fire except our red fire, nor any earth except that which is pallid or slightly white. But if you thus prepare the elements, the earth will be ready for solution, the water efficacious for digestion, and the oil, in which is the fire, eminently fitted for tinging. If the end of your process should not present you with such elements, this is an indication of error; set about the correction thereof, for it will be easier than beginning again. Keep each element carefully sealed up in a well-stoppered jar, write upon each its own name, and a record of its properties, for it would be fatal to mistake one for the other.

On the third Regimen, which is that of Reduction.

The third regimen consists in bringing back the humid water to the dry earth, that it may recover its lost humidity. Since fire and earth are both dry elements, they must first be

combined before this restoration can take place. Then the dry elements will be in a condition to drink up more moisture than they had before, for calcination disintegrates a body and so empties it of all moisture, that it will imbibe its aqueous humidity very greedily.
Arnold here places a chapter on the albification and sublimation of the earth by frequent pounding, imbibition, and digestion of the Mercury. When this process is fully accomplished, that is, when it ascends white as snow, we have the good, flaky, brilliantly white earth, or the white incombustible sulphur. If you wish to obtain red sulphur, dissolve this white sulphur in red water, by means of pounding, and saturation, and good decoction; coagulate it alternately into a stone and alternately dissolve what is coagulated in the red water. After the third time, sublime the whole in a fierce fire, and that which rises upward will be snowy white sulphur, while that which remains at the bottom will be red, like scarlet. Hence you see that while there are two different stages of our magistery, there is in reality only one Stone.

The true method of bringing back the Water to the Earth.

Pour at first upon the earth (which you have carefully pounded) one-fiftieth part its own quantity of water; for it is necessary at the beginning to give the earth little water, just as an infant has to be given at first little nutriment. and then gradually more. This should be repeated over and over again, with great patience, more and more water being poured over the earth each time, but not more than the earth can conveniently drink up; after each trituration and effusion, the whole should be subjected to thorough coction for eight days at a time. Without constant, patient irrigation the earth cannot bring forth fruit. Continue the trituration and assation until all the water has been absorbed and dried up, while the earth has become white. The water is to be administered temperately after each calcination; too much of it will produce a tempestuous condition; too little will convert the matter into glowing ashes.
The degree of heat applied should be that of horse dung. After imbibition, it should be inhumed for seven days. There are three colours, marking the three stages of this process. The black colour shows that the substance is still imperfect: after its appearance the heat of the fire should be slightly increased. By constantly repeating the process you will soon make the earth white; and then you should behold the orange colour. The more limpid the water, the more limpid the earth will be; the more the earth is washed, the whiter it will become.
Things are sublimed either by themselves, if they are spirits, or, if bodies, they are sublimed by means of some spiritual substance. Our earth is not sublimed in its condition as calx, unless it be first subtly incorporated with mercury. Hence you should pound the earth, saturate it with mercury, and digest them till they become one body. This must be repeated over and over again, or else the sublimation cannot take place, because the earth will not be properly incorporated with the mercury. Sublimation is contingent upon the reduction of the body into a subtle matter and nature. By means of this sublimation bodies are freed from their grosser elements, and reduced to their first matter, which can then be perfectly developed. If you wish to develop the sublimed substance into silver, both earth and mercury should be white: if you wish to develop it into gold, they should both be red, and the ponder should be incerated. When Mercury is sublimed for the Moon, nothing else should be mixed with it, for the colour of the Sun does not enter into the Moon, nor that of the Moon into the Sun. Do not

mix that which ascends and that which remains below. That which remains below should be again pounded and saturated, till the whole is sublimed or incorporated with Mercury. In the sublimation of Mercury you will see a most white earth, like snow, and, as it were, a dead powder adhering to the sides of the aludel. Reiterate sublimation thereon, without the faeces remaining below. Soon that which ascends will settle in the shape of a white, flaky powder. These are the superior ashes, while that which remains below is the foul sediment, and should be removed. In this way the white sulphur or white tincture is perfected.

The fourth Regimen, which consists in Fixation, and for this purpose we need a certain Ferment.

The fourth operation is to fix the white and red sulphur over a fixed body, i.e., silver and gold respectively. Without a proper ferment the Moon cannot become the Sun, but the substance, having nothing to prevent it from doing so, will again revert into water. It must therefore be incorporated with the body from which it was first prepared, viz., the Moon or the Sun. It is necessary, in fact, to Unite it to its own proper body. For this purpose mix it with the ferment (either white or red), which will completely assimilate it to its own nature. Do not mix the ferment of one (white) sulphur with another (red) sulphur: the result would be disappointing. The ferment of gold is gold, and the ferment of silver is silver, and there are no other proper ferments in all the world, because nothing fixes which is not itself fixed.

The weight of the Ferment must exceed, or at least be equal to, the weight of its Sulphur.

The quantity of volatile sulphur in any ferment must not be greater than that of its body. If there be a preponderance of the body, says Plato, it will quickly change the volatile sulphur into a powder of its own colour, i.e., either that of gold or of silver. The sulphur cannot enter the bodies except through the medium of water, the intermediate substance between the sulphur and the ferment. Therefore put first the earth, then the water, and then the air (Avicenna). If you wish to obtain the red Tincture, put in the fourth place fire, since the white Tincture needs only three elements, but the red Tincture needs fire as well. Open, therefore, and seal, solve and coagulate, wash and dry, for water is the medium which joins the tinctures of oil, air, and fire. If you first take oil and then earth, the oil will mortify in the earth, for the water will enter. If you first take water and then oil, the oil will float upon the water. But if you first take water and afterwards earth, the water will outweigh the earth. Fix, therefore, the water with the earth till it adheres to it. If one of the four be destroyed, all will die; if one have more soul than another, it will be worthless. The ferment is the soul, see that you arrange fermentation so as to produce a calcined, dissolved, and indurated dust. If the fermentation he not rightly performed, the whole Magistery will fail.

The practical uses of dividing the elements.

If you do not divide the Stone into its four elements, the soul cannot well be united to the body. If you do not mix of the body with that over which you desire to make the projection, the body will not love the spirit. If you do not combine the ferment with the elixir, the body over which the projection is made is not properly coloured. If you do not sublime all you put

into the elixir, it will be rough gold and silver, and if the whole be not prepared, it will not sustain the fire. Finally, without pains in softening and hardening, the gold and silver will want ductility in operating. The earth which is put into the elixir must be sublimed, in order that the whole may be completely united. If you wish to project the elixir, make earth of that substance whose body you wish to change, and put in the ferment (as above), if it be gold, of gold, and if it be silver, of silver. You must combine the ferment with the body on which you desire to project the elixir. The body and the ferment which are combined in the elixir must be a powder twice or thrice sublimed. Each sublimation will intensify the virtue of the elixir, namely, one upon a hundred, a hundred upon a thousand, and so on to infinity.

We must be careful about the proper quantity of each substance.

If you wish to prepare our Stone, you should know how much water, and air, and fire, and earth it contains when it is calcined when it is dissolved, and when it is reduced respectively. In the first case, there will be greater dryness, greater heat, less moisture, less cold. In the second, there will be greater cold, less heat, more moisture, and less dryness. In the third, there will be greater heat, less moisture, more dryness, and less cold.

How the Elements are improved, and how the Fusion of the Medicine is affected.

In the conjunction of the Stone, expect three principal colours, first the black, then the white, then the red. Take care that the tincture does not become red before it becomes black, for then it will perish by combustion, and that none of the colours appear before their proper time, or out of their proper order. Should the red appear before the black, or before the white, decoct the whole in white water till the proper colour is restored. Note also that decoction by inhumation obviates the error of combustion, and restores lost humidity. If the medicine does not combine properly, correct by dissolution. The purification and dissolution are brought about, not by common, but by mercurial water. We calcine the medicine that we may the better dissolve it, that it may the better be cleansed, fixed, and melted. and that the bodies may receive a better impression therefrom, and may be more fully permeated thereby. Towards the end of the Magistery, it is a good plan to dissolve the body of the ferment whether white or red, in order that it may amalgamate all the more readily. Not all the parts are separated ill dissolution, but the separation is sufficiently complete to ensure the removal of all impurities. If the metal which is to be changed by means of the Medicine, have not sufficient colour, more of the Medicine should be added; if it have too much, the dose should be smaller. If the Medicine be not sufficiently fixed, the remedy lies in repeating the dissolution and coagulation several times. If it be too firm, more of oil, that is, the air of the Stone, should be added; and observe, as a general rule, that for fixation you must have more of the cold and dry, and less of the hot and humid elements.

Of the quantities to be observed in Fixation.

All Nature is ruled by ratio and proportion; hence, in the fixation of our Stone, we must know how much we need of water, air, earth, and fire. If the right proportions are not observed, our whole work will be a failure. Either too much or too little of earth, air, fire, and water would entail some corresponding defect. I speak here of elixirs in general, but fire is not introduced

as an element of the white elixir. The heavy elements in our substance and the ferment are called earth: those which rise upward are described as air and water. For fixation into earth, in the case of the white Tincture, there should always be more of earth than of the other elements. If there be 1 1/2 oz. of air, and 2 oz. of water, there must be 2 3/4 oz. of earth, and thrice as much of the ferment of earth as there is of white sulphur. If there be 1 oz. of white sulphur, there must be 3 ozs. of the ferment. Add 2 oz. of water, 1 1/2 oz. of air, and the elixir will be complete. For the solar Tincture, which is of hotter quality than that of the Moon, we need 2 ozs. of earth, 3 of water, as many of air, and 1 1/2 oz. of fire - for if there be much water and little fire, the fire will be extinguished. The heavy elements, like earth and water, are more useful for the purpose of producing fixation and rest; the lighter elements, viz., air and fire. are more useful for the purposes of fusion and of the Tincture. Do not eat what you do not drink, neither drink what you do not eat, but eat and drink one after the other according to the requirements of our art.

On the Fixation and Composition of the White Elixir.

No body which has not first been purified can possibly retain its soul. Let there be drinking after eating, not vice versa. Fix well, mix well, tinge well: and you have the whole Magistery. Pound three parts of pure powdered silver well with twice its quantity of white quicksilver in a mortar of porphyry, till the Mercury has drunk up all the silver, and the compound is of the consistency of butter.
Purify it with vinegar and common salt, till the vinegar comes out pure and clear; then wash away the salt with clean, sweet water, and dry before the fire. Pound it with one part of the white sulphur till the two become one body, incerate it with one part of its white water, and sublime little by little over the fire, till all that is volatile in it has ascended upward; take it out when cool and collect the particles which have settled on the sides of the vessel; then repeat the process of pounding, saturation, and sublimation - constantly reducing that which ascends upward to that which lies fixed below, till all is fixed, which is naturally brought about by the coagulative virtue of the fixed sulphur. In short, study Nature, and supply her with all necessary outward conditions: then you may trust to her to do the rest. When your earth is impregnated you may expect a birth in Nature's own good time; when the birth has taken place, nourish and strengthen it to support the fire, and you will be able to make projections.

Of the Reduction of Air upon the White Elixir.

When the water is fixed with the earth, pound it, saturate it by sprinkling with one part of its air, sublime it with a gradually increasing fire, till by constant sublimation the whole is fixed. Then expose it to a good fire for twenty-four hours, to a still fiercer fire for another day and night, and to a very fierce fire, proper for melting, on the third day and night. The air will then be fixed with the earth and water.

Inceration of the White Elixir.

Take one drachm of the crystal plate which you find at the bottom of the vessel; pound it, and drop on it slowly, in a thin crucible, over a gentle fire, some of its white air, till it becomes liquid, like was, without any smoke. Test upon a hot plate, and if it melt swiftly like wax, the

ceration is complete. If not, complete the process by dropping its white oil gradually thereon, till it becomes like smokeless melted wax. Continue the sublimation until the whole substance is fixed. That is, when by sublimation you have fixed the purest part of the earth, reiterate the sublimation upon the unfixed part over the fixed part, until all is fixed. Try its fusibility over a good fire; if the result be satisfactory, the sublimation need not be continued. If not, continue sublimation in respect of the unfixed part. Then let it cool, and you have a priceless Tincture, one part of which - with salt dissolved in vinegar - will transmute 1,000 parts of Mercury, or common metal, into the purest silver, better than that of the mine.

The Composition of the Red Elixir.

The Red Elixir - for changing metals into gold - is prepared in the same way as the White Elixir, gold being in this case substituted for silver. For every white thing substitute a red thing of the same kind; in the place of powdered silver put powdered gold, and the water of Mercury made red with the fire of the Stone. Sublime the substance again and again till all the quicksilver has become fixed. When three-quarters of the red water are fixed, place the whole for twenty-four hours over a very gentle fire, that it may be the better cleansed and fixed. Remove it subsequently and cerate in a crucible, also over a very slow fire. Drop upon it its red oil, till it becomes liquid as wax without smoke. One part of this Red Tincture projected upon silver, or purified quicksilver - with salt and vinegar - changes 1,000 parts of either into the purest gold better than that of the mine and withstanding every test. Hence the Sages say that their gold and silver are not as the gold and silver of the multitude seeing that they are distinguished by infinitely greater purity.

On the Multiplication of the Medicines.

If you dissolve those medicines, after their fixation and saturation with their white or red oils, till they flow like wax, and then in their white or red Mercury, till they look like clear water, and afterwards coagulate them by gentle digestion, and again make them liquid with their oils over the fire till they flow very swiftly, their virtue in projection will be doubled. If, when they are dissolved, you distil them once, their powers are multiplied an hundred fold. To multiply the medicines, dissolve the spirit of each respectively in its water by inhumation. Separate from each its oil by distillation, then their water, then their fire, and the earth will remain below. Reduce the water by sublimation over the earth, till it is fixed with the earth; then saturate it with the oil, or air, and the tincture till it is fixed and liquid like wax; its virtue will then be multiplied tenfold; repeat the operation, and its virtue will each time be enhanced 100, 1,000, 10,000 fold, etc. The oftener the Medicine is dissolved, sublimed, and coagulated, the more potent it becomes; in each sublimation its projective virtue is multiplied by ten.

What do we mean by Dissolution and Sublimation ?

When I speak of solution, you must not think that the elixir is to be altogether resolved into water, but is only to be subtilized as far as possible to have its parts divided, that which is dry in it made humid, and that which is gross made simple, since dissolution is practised for the work of subtilization only, but not sublimation, and for the purpose of uniting the body and the spirit. The subtilization of bodies is the dissolution into water, because distillation or

dissolution educes the Stone from potentiality into effect, in which the body and the spirit meet each other halfway, and are thus inseparably conjoined. The confirmation of spirits with bodies takes place when bodies are subtilized, for not otherwise will these retain the spirits. I have not said too much; but if there be anything in my remarks which you do not understand, read them over again and again, until you have become completely possessed of my meaning. What we have said is the strict rule of truth, and you must not depart from it either to the right or to the left, or you will go wrong. If you do not understand my wrong meaning, do not blame me, but your own ignorance.

How to make the Projection.

Now, seeing that it is a matter of some difficulty to melt a million parts together, when you wish to make projection proceed as follows: Take a hundred parts of Mercury, cleansed with vinegar and salt; place it in a crucible over the fire; when it begins to bubble up, add one part of your Elixir, and project the whole upon one hundred other parts of boiling purified Mercury. Then project one part of this entire mixture upon one hundred parts of purified Mercury, and the whole will be turned into our Elixir. Then project one part of this last, coagulated, upon a hundred parts of purified Mercury, and it will become the purest gold, or silver, according as the Tincture is red or white. And this is the Rosary of the Philosophers, bearing fragrant roses, both white and red, the essential extract of many books, having nothing superfluous, omitting nothing needful, for the infinite production of true Sun and Moon. Our Medicine has also power to heal all infirmity and diseases, both of inflammation and debility: it turns an old man into a youth. If the illness be of one month's standing, it may be cured in a day; if of one year's standing it may be healed in twelve days; if of many years' standing, it may be healed in a month. Hence this Medicine is not without reason prized above all other treasures that this world affords.

Recapitulation of the whole work.

First sublime the substance, and purge it of all corrupting impurity; dissolve also, therewith, its white or red additament till the whole is as subtle and volatile as it can possibly become. Then fix it by all methods till it is able to stand the test of the fire. After that, sublime the fixed part of the Stone together with its volatile part; make the fixed volatile, and the volatile fixed, by alternate solution and sublimation; so continue, and then fix them both together till they form a white or red liquid Tincture. In this way you obtain the priceless arcanum which is above all the treasures of the world. Give yourself wholly to this study; meditate on it day and night; and, above all, check the truth of your theoretic notions by constant reference to practice. You will not find in all the books of the Sages anything clearer and plainer than what I have told you. Praise to the Trinity and glory to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Pontanus - Epistle on the mineral fire

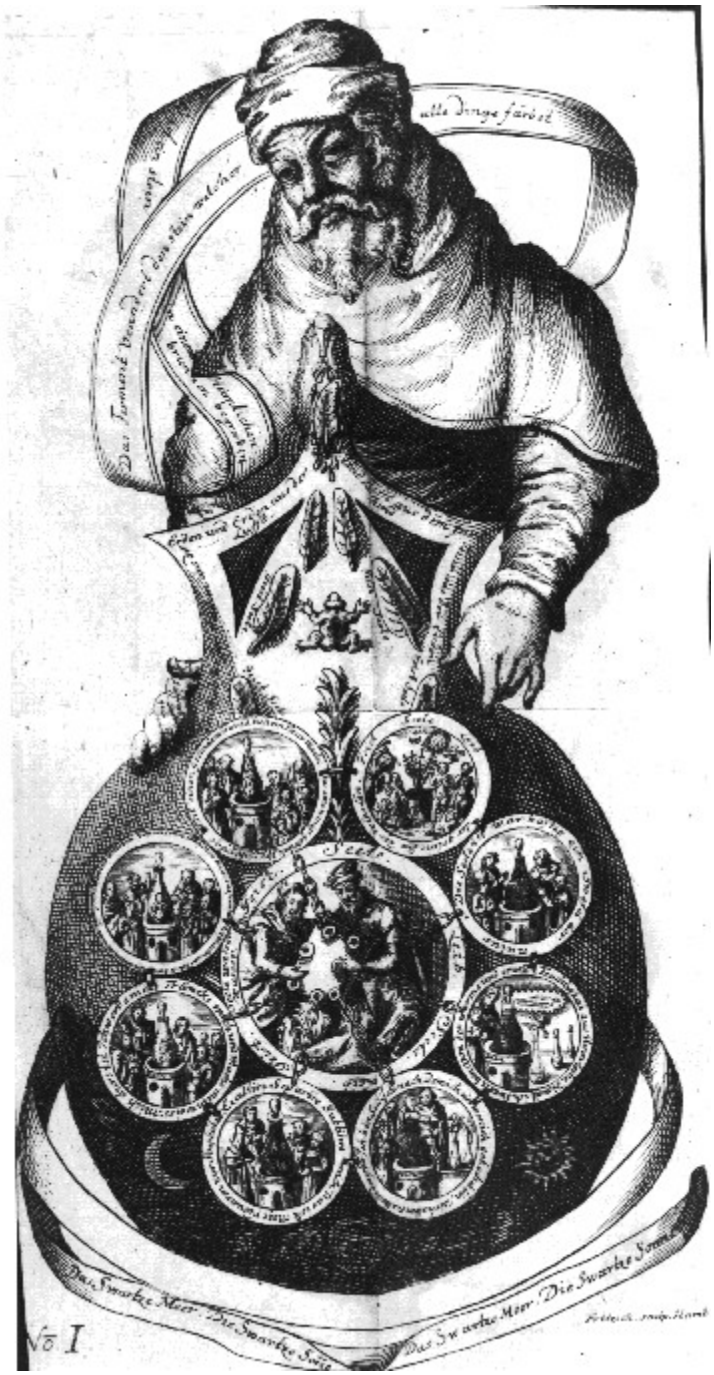
I John Pontan have travelled over many regions, that I might learn something that was certain concerning the philosophers stone; and, compassing almost the whole world, met with none but impostors, false deceivers, and no philosophers: But studying always, doubting much, and casting every way, at length I found the truth: But when I knew the matter, I erred two hundred times before I found the true matter, with the operation, and practice upon it. First, I fell to putrefie the matter nine months together, and found nothing: I put it in St. Mary's Bath for a certain time, and erred in that, as before. Then for three months I put it to a fire of Calcination, and wrought amisse: all manner of Distillations, and Sublimations, such as the Philosophers, as Geber, Archelaus, and almost all the rest, say, or seem to say, should be used, I practised; and found nothing still. Then again I tryed to perfect the subject of the whole alchymical art, all the wayes that can be imagined; by baths, by dungs, by ashes, and a multiplicity of other fires, which are yet found in the philosophers books; and yet for all that I found no good. Wherefore, for three years continued, I studied the philosophers' books, but chiefly the works of Hermes alone, whose shorter words comprehend the whole stone; although he speaks obscurely of the Superior, and Inferior, of the Heaven, and of the Earth. The first instrument therefore that brings the matter to its Esse in the first, second and third work, is not the fire of the bath, nor of dung, nor ashes, nor of the other heats which the philosophers have in their books. What therefore is that fire that perfects the whole work from the beginning to the end? Certainly the philosophers hav always concealed it; but I being moved with piety, and kindness to men, will declare it to you, together with the complement of the whole work. It is then the philosophers' stone, but is called by various names, and thou shalt find it hard to know: For it is watery, airy, fiery and earthy; phlegmatic, choleric and melancholy; it is sulphureous, and is likewise argent vive: and has many superfluities in it: all which, by the living God, are turned into a true essence, our fire mediating: And he that separates any thing from the subject thinking that necessary, knows nothing in philosophy; because whatever is superfluous, unclean, foul or feculent, finally the whole substance of the subject is perfected to a spiritual body fixed, by mediation of our fire. And this the Philosophers never revealed, and therefore few come at the art, thinking there is some such superfluous nature to be removed. And now we are to draw out the properties of our fire, and try, whether according to the manner that I have said, it be so fitted to our matter, that it may be transmuted by it, since that fire burns not the matter, separates nothing from it, parts not the pure from the impure (as all philosophers say) but turns the whole subject to purity: It does not sublime as Geber make his sublimations and as Arnoldus, and others speaking of sublimation and distillation, such as are perfected in a short time.

It is mineral, it is equal, it is continual, it vapours not away unless it be stirred up too much; it also partakes of sulphur, and is taken from somewhere else that from the matter; it pulls down all, dissolves and congeales, and calcines: the invention of it is artificial: it is a compendium without cost, or with very little; and that fire is of a moderate ignition, because with a remiss fire the whole work is perfected, and all the right sublimations made. Whosoever should read Geber, and all the rest, if they should live an hundred thousand years, would not be able to

comprehend it, because that fire is found only by profound imagination; and then it may be comprehended in the books, and not before. The error therefore of this art, is, not to find the Fire, which turns the whole matter into the true Stone of the Philosophers. Take it then for thy study; for if I had found this fire at first, I had not erred two hundred times in my practice upon the matter: wherefore I wonder not, that so many, and great wits, have not come at the work. They err, have erred, and will err still, because the Philosophers have not set down the proper agent; one only excepted, Artephius by name, but he speaks for himself; and if I had not read Artephius and heard him what he said, I had never attained the perfect work. But this is the practice. Take it, bruise it, and bring it down diligently by natural contrition, and put it to the fire, and know the propertion of your fire, namely that it is to be no stronger than only to excite the matter, and in a short time even that fire without any opposition of hands, will certainly complete the whole work; for it will putrefy, corrupt, generate, and perfect, and make it to appear in their times the three principal colours, black, white and red. And by mediation of our fire, the medicine will be multiplied if it be joined with crude matter, not only in quantity, but also in virtue. Therefore with all thy power look after thy fire, and thou mayst prosper in thy work, because it does the whole work, and is the key of the philosophers which they never discovered. But thou shalt come to know it by a right, profound thinking upon the properties of the fire set down before, and no otherways. This I writ out of piety, and that I may satisfy thee finally; The fire is not transmuted with the matter, because it is not of the matter, as I told you before. This much I had in mind to say, and admonish the prudent, that they spend not their money to no purpose, but that they should know what they are to look for, and so they may attain to the truth and no other way.

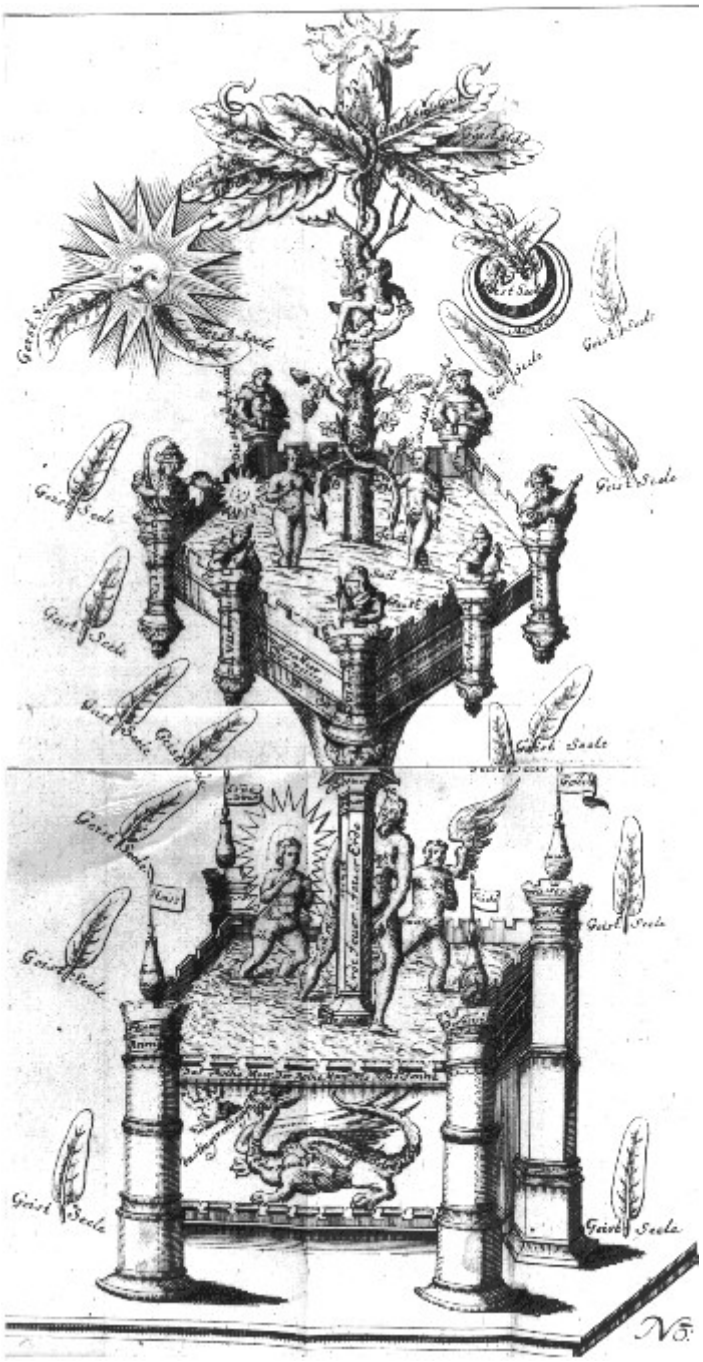
The Ripley Scroll

Of the son take the light
The Red gum that is so bright
And of the Moon do also
The which gum they both trowe
The philosophers Sulphur vive
This I call it without strife
Kybright and Kebright it is called also
And other names many more
Of them drawe out a tincture
And make of them a marriage pure
Between the husband and the wife
Espowsed with the water of life
But of this water thou must beware
Or else thy work will be full bare
He must be made of his own kind
Mark thou now in thy mind
Acetome of philosophers men call this



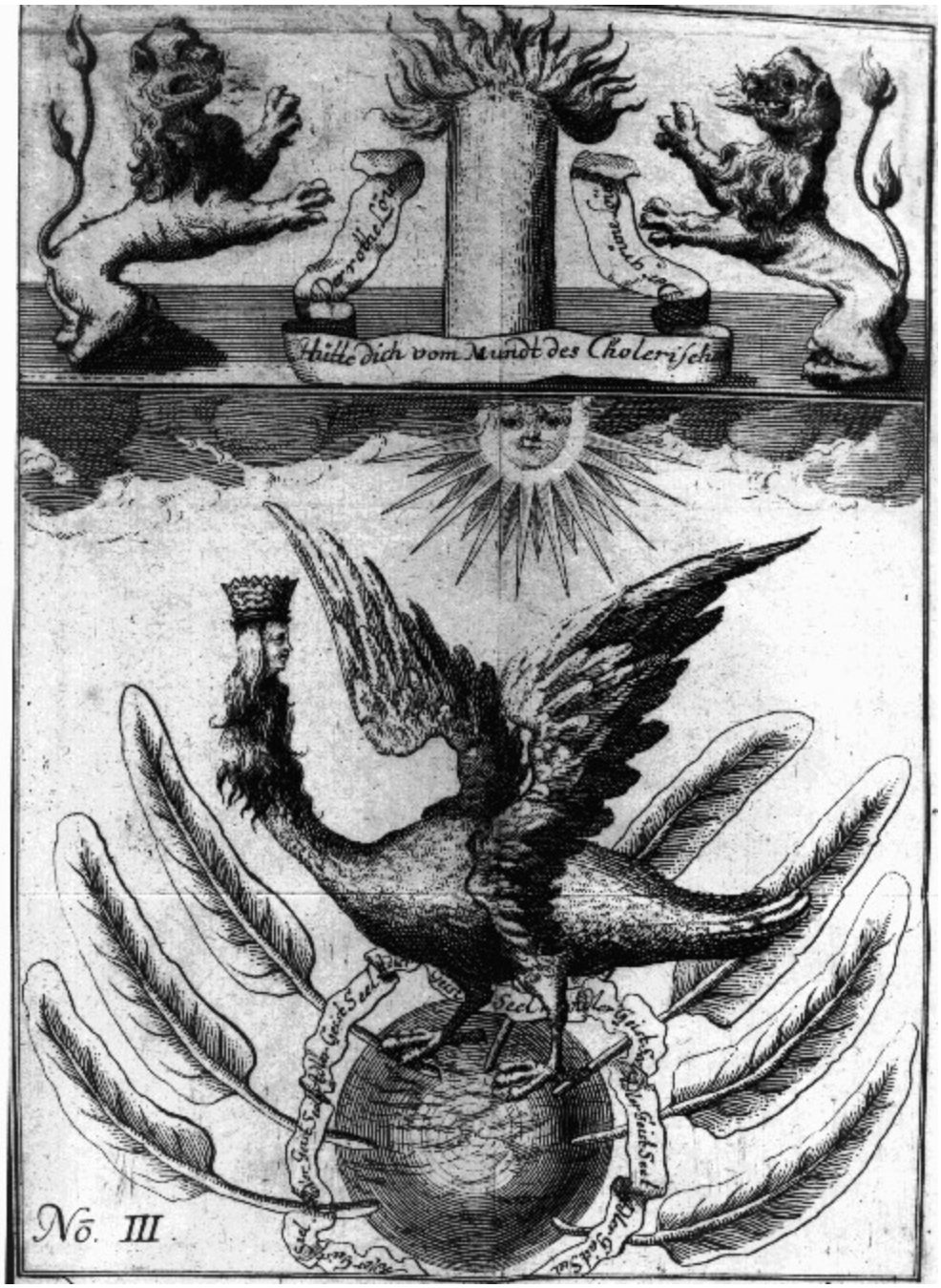
A water abiding so it is
The maidens milk of the dew
That all the work doth renew
The Serpent of life it is called also
And other names many more
The which causeth generation
Betwixt the man and the woman
But looke thou no division
Be there in the conjunction

Of the moon and of sun
After the marriage be begun



And all the while they be a wedding
Give to them their drinking
Acetome that is good and fine
Better to them then any wine
Now when this marriage is done
Philosophers call it a stone
The which hath a great nature
To bring a stone that is so pure

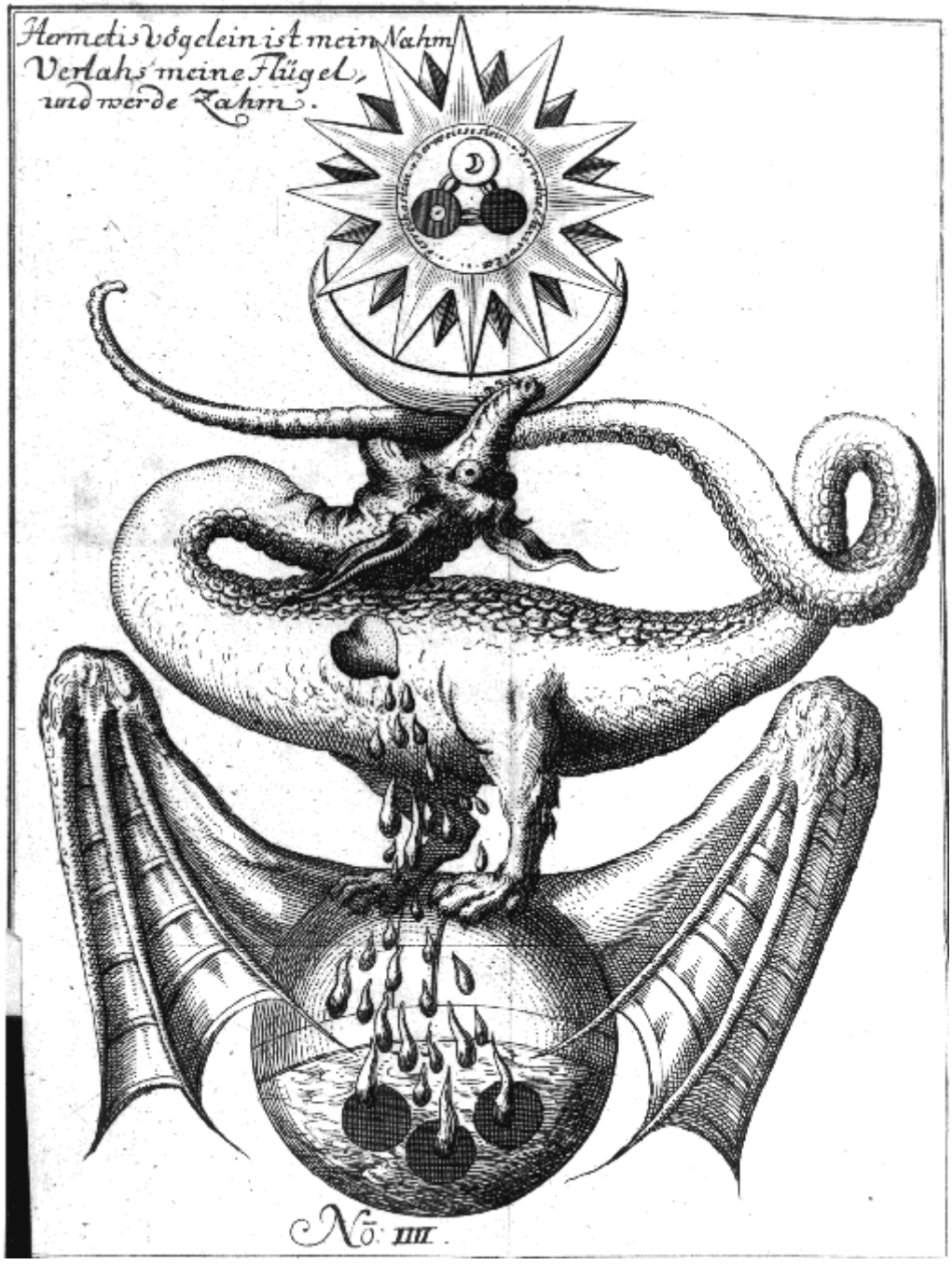
So he have kindly nourishment
Perfect heat and decoction



But in the matrix when they be put
Let never the glasse be unshut
Till they have ingendred a stone
In the world there not such a one

On the ground there is a hill
Also a serpent within a well
His tail is long with wings wide
All ready to flee by every side

Repair the well fast about
That thy serpent pass not out



For if that he be there a gone
Thou lose the virtue of the stone
Where is the ground you must know here
And the well that is so clear
And what is the dragon with the tail
Or else the work shall little avail
The well must run in water clear
Take good heed for this your fire

The fire with water bright shall be burnt
And water with fire washed shall be

The earth on fire shall be put
And water with air shall be knit
Thus ye shall go to purification
And bring the serpent to redemption
First he shall be black as a crow
And down in his den shall lie full low
Swelling as a toad that lieth on the ground
Burst with bladders sitting so round
They shall to burst and lie full plain

And this with craft the serpent is slain
He shall shine colors here many a one
And turn as white as whale's bone
With the water that he was in
Wash him clear from his sin
And let him drink a little and a light
And that shall make him fair and white
The which whiteness be abiding
Lo here is a very full finishing
Of the white stone and the red
Lo here is the very true deed.

Take the father that Phoebus so high
That sit so high in majesty
With his beams that shines so bright
In all places wherever that he be
For he is father to all things
Maintainer of life to crop and root
And causeth nature for to spring
With the wife beginneth soothe
For he is salve to every sore
To bring about this prosperous work
Take good heed unto this lore
I say unto learned and unto clerk
And Homogenie is my name
Which God made with his own hand
And Magnesia is my dame
You shall verily understand.
Now I shall here begin
For to teach thee a ready way
Or else little shall thou win
Take good heed what I do say
Divide thou Phoebus in many parts
With his beams that be so bright
And this with nature him convert
The which is mirror of all light
This Phoebus hath full many a name
Which that is full hard to know
And but thou take the very same
The philosophers stone ye shall not know
Therefore I counsel ere ye begin
Know it well what it should be
And that is thick make it thin
For then it shall full well like thee

Now understand what I mean
And take good heed thereto
Our work else shall little be seen
And turn thee to much woe
As I have said this our lore
Many a name I wish he hath
Some behind and some before
As philosophers doth him give

In the sea without lees
Standeth the bird of Hermes
Eating his wings variable
And maketh himself yet full stable
When all his feathers be from him gone
He standeth still here as a stone
Here is now both white and red
And all so the stone to quicken the dead
All and some without fable
Both hard and soft and malleable
Understand now well and right
And thank you God of this sight

I shall you tell with plain declaration
Where, how, and what is my generation
Omogeni is my Father
And Magnesia is my Mother
And Azot truly is my Sister
And Kibrick forsooth is my Brother
The Serpent of Arabia is my name
The which is leader of all this game
That sometime was both wood and wild
And now I am both meek and mild
The Sun and the Moon with their might
Have chastised me that was so light
My wings that me brought
Hither and thither where I thought
Now with their might they down me pull,
And bring me where they will
The Blood of mine heart I wish
Now causeth both joy and blisse
And dissolveth the very Stone
And knitteth him ere he have done
Now maketh hard that was lix

And causeth him to be fix
Of my blood and water I wish
Plenty in all the World there is
It runneth in every place
Who it findeth he hath grace
In the World it runneth over all
And goeth round as a ball
But thou understand well this
Of the worke thou shalt miss
Therefore know ere thou begin
What he is and all his kin
Many a name he hath full sure
And all is but one Nature
Thou must part him in three
And then knit him as the Trinity
And make them all but one
Lo here is the Philosophers Stone

Turba Philosophorum

The Epistle of Arisleus, prefixed to the Words of the Sages, concerning the Purport of this Book, for the Benefit of Posterity, and the same being as here follows:-

Arisleus, begotten of Pythagoras, a disciple of the disciples by the grace of thrice great Hermes, learning from the seat of knowledge, unto all who come after wisheth health and mercy. I testify that my master, Pythagoras, the Italian, master of the wise and chief of the Prophets, had a greater gift of God and of Wisdom than was granted to any one after Hermes. Therefore he had a mind to assemble his disciples, who were now greatly increased, and had been constituted the chief persons throughout all regions for the discussion of this most precious Art, that their words might be a foundation for posterity. He then commanded Iximidrus, of highest council, to be the first speaker, who said:-

The First Dictum.

Iximidrus Saith:- I testify that the beginning of all things is a Certain Nature, which is perpetual, coequalling all things, and that the visible natures, with their births and decay, are times wherein the ends to which that nature brings them are beheld and summoned. Now, I instruct you that the stars are igneous, and are kept within bounds by the air. If the humidity and density of the air did not exist to separate the flames of the sun from living things, then the Sun would consume all creatures. But God has provided the separating air, lest that which He has created should be burnt up. Do you not: observe that the Sun when it rises in the heaven overcomes the air by its heat, and that the warmth penetrates from the upper to the lower parts of the air? If, then, the air did not presently breathe forth those winds whereby

creatures are generated, the Sun by its heat would certainly destroy all that lives. But the Sun is kept in check by the air, which thus conquers because it unites the heat of the Sun to its own heat, and the humidity of water to its own humidity. Have you not remarked how tenuous water is drawn up into the air by the action of the heat of the Sun, which thus helps the water against itself? If the water did not nourish the air by such tenuous moisture, assuredly the Sun would overcome the air. The fire, therefore, extracts moisture from the water, by means of which the air conquers the fire itself. Thus, fire and water are enemies between which there is no consanguinity, for the fire is hot and dry, but the water is cold and moist. The air, which is warm and moist, joins these together by its concording medium; between the humidity of water and the heat of fire the air is thus placed to establish peace. rind look ye all how there shall arise a spirit from the tenuous vapour of the air, because the heat being joined to the humour, there necessarily issues something tenuous, which will become a wind. For the heat of the Sun extracts something tenuous out of the air, which also becomes spirit and life to all creatures. All this, however, is disposed in such manner by the will of God, and a coruscation appears when the heat of the Sun touches and breaks up a cloud.

The Turba saith:- Well hast thou described the fire, even as thou knowest concerning it, and thou hast believed the word of thy brother.

The Second Dictum.

Exumedrus saith:- I do magnify the air according to the mighty speech of Iximidrus, for the work is improved thereby. The air is inspissated, and it is also made thin; it grows warm and becomes cold. The inspissation thereof takes place when it is divided in heaven by the elongation of the Sun; its rarefaction is when, by the exaltation of the Sun in heaven, the air becomes warm and is rarefied. It is comparable with the complexion of Spring, in the distinction of time, which is neither warm nor cold. For according to the mutation of the constituted disposition with the altering distinctions of the soul, so is Winter altered. The air, therefore, is inspissated when the Sun is removed from it, and then cold supervenes upon men.

Whereat the Turba said:- Excellently hast thou described the air, and given account of what thou knowest to be therein.

The Third Dictum.

Anaxagoras saith:- I make known that the beginning of all those things which God hath created is weight and proportion, for weight rules all things, and the weight and spissitude of the earth is manifest in proportion; but weight is not found except in body. And know, all ye Turba, that the spissitude of the four elements reposes in the earth; for the spissitude of fire falls into air, the spissitude of air, together with the spissitude received from the fire, falls into water; the spissitude also of water, increased by the spissitude of fire and air, reposes in earth. Have you not observed how the spissitude of the four elements is conjoined in earth! The same, therefore, is more inspissated than all.

Then saith the Turba:- Thou hast well spoken. Verily the earth is more inspissated than are the rest. Which, therefore, is the most rare of the four elements and is most worthy to possess the rarity of these four?

He answereth:- Fire is the most rare among all, and thereunto cometh what is rare of these four. But air is less rare than fire, because it is warm and moist, while fire is warm and dry; now that which is warm and dry is more rare than the warm and moist.

They say unto him:- The which element is of less rarity than air!

He answereth:- Water, since cold and moisture inhere therein, and every cold humid is of less rarity than a warm humid.

Then do they say unto him:- Thou hast spoken truly. What, therefore, is of less rarity than water?

He answereth:- Earth, because it is cold and dry, and that which is cold and dry is of less rarity than that which is cold and moist.

Pythagoras saith:- Well have ye provided, O Sons of the Doctrine, the description of these four natures, out of which God hath created all things. Blessed, therefore, is he who comprehends what ye have declared, for from the apex of the world he shall not find an intention greater than his own! Let us, therefore, make perfect our discourse.

They reply:- Direct every one to take up our speech in turn. Speak thou, O Pandolfus!

The Fourth Dictum.

But Pandolfus saith:- I signify to posterity that air is a tenuous matter of water, and that it is not: separated from it. It remains above the dry earth, to wit, the air hidden in the water, which is under the earth. If this air did not exist, the earth would not remain above the humid water.

They answer:- Thou hast said well; complete, therefore, thy speech.

But he continueth:- The air which is hidden in the water under the earth is that which sustains the earth, lest it should be plunged into the said water; and it, moreover, prevents the earth from being overflowed by that water. The province of the air is, therefore, to fill up and to make separation between diverse things, that is to say, water and earth, and it is constituted a peacemaker between hostile things, namely, water and fire, dividing these, lest they destroy one another.

The Turba saith:- If you gave an illustration hereof, it would be clearer to those who do not understand.

He answereth:- An egg is an illustration, for therein four things are conjoined; the visible cortex or shell represents the earth, and the albumen, for white part, is the water. But a very thin inner cortex is joined to the outer cortex, representing, as I have signified to you, the

separating medium between earth and water, namely, that air which divides the earth from the water. The yolk also of the egg represents fire; the cortex which contains the yolk corresponds to that other air which separates the water from the fire. But they are both one and the same air, namely, that which separates things frigid, the earth from the water, and that which separates the water from the fire. But the lower air is thicker than the upper air, and the upper air is more rare and subtle, being nearer to the fire than the lower air. In the egg, therefore, are four things- earth, water, air, and fire. But the point of the Sun, these four excepted, is in the centre of the yolk, and this is the chicken. Consequently, all philosophers in this most excellent art have described the egg as an example, which same thing they have set over their work.

The Fifth Dictum.

Arisleus saith:- Know that the earth is a hill and not a plain, for which reason the Sun does not ascend over all the zones of the earth in a single hour; but if it were flat, the sun would rise in a moment over the whole earth.

Parmenides saith:- Thou hast spoken briefly, O Arisleus!

He answereth: Is there anything the Master has left us which bears witness otherwise? Yet I testify that God is one, having never engendered or been begotten, and that the head of all things after Him is earth and fire, because fire is tenuous and light, and it rules all things on earth, but the earth, being ponderous and gross, sustains all things which are ruled by fire.

The Sixth Dictum.

Lucas saith:- You speak only about four natures; and each one of you observes something concerning these. Now, I testify unto you that all things which God hath created are from these four natures, and the things which have been created out of them return into them, In these living creatures are generated and die, and all things take place as God hath predestinated.

Democritus, the disciple of Lucas, answereth:- Thou hast well spoken, O Lucas, when dealing with the four natures!

Then saith Arisleus:- O Democritus, since thy knowledge was derived from Lucas, it is presumption to speak among those who are well acquainted with thy master!

Lucas answereth:- albeit Democritus received from me the science of natural things, that knowledge was derived from the philosophers of the Indies and from the Babylonians; I think he surpasses those of his own age in this learning.

The Turba answereth:- When he attains to that age he will give no small satisfaction, but being in his youth he should keep silence.

The Seventh Dictum.

Lucusta saith:- All those creatures which have been described by Lucas are two only, of which one is neither known nor expressed, except by piety, for it is not seen or felt.

Pythagoras saith:- Thou hast entered upon a subject which, if completed, thou wilt describe subtly. State, therefore, what is this thing which is neither felt, seen, nor known.

Then he:- It is that which is not known, because in this world it is discerned by reason without the clients thereof, which are sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch. O Crowd of the Philosophers, know you not that it Is only sight which can distinguish white from black, and hearing only which can discriminate between a good and bad word! Similarly, a wholesome odour cannot be separated by reason from one which is fetid, except through the sense of smell, nor can sweetness be discriminated from bitterness save by means of taste, nor smooth from rough unless by touch.

The Turba answereth:- Thou hast well spoken, yet hast thou omitted to treat of that particular thing which is not known, or described, except by reason and piety.

Saith he:- Are ye then in such haste! Know that the creature which is cognised in none of these five ways is a sublime creature, and, as such, is neither seen nor felt, but is perceived by reason alone, of which reason Nature confesses that God is a partaker.

They answer:- Thou hast spoken truly and excellently.

And he:- I will now give a further explanation. Know that this creature, that is to say, the world, hath a light, which is the Sun, and the same is more subtle than all other natures, which light is so ordered that living beings may attain to vision. But if this subtle light were removed, they would become darkened, seeing nothing, except the light of the moon, or of the stars, or of fire, all which are derived from the light of the Sun, which causes all creatures to give light. For this God has appointed the Sun to be the light of the world, by reason of the attenuated nature of the Sun. And know that the sublime creature before mentioned has no need of the light of this Sun, because the Sun is beneath that creature, which is more subtle and more lucid. This light, which is more lucid than the light of the Sun, they have taken from the light of God, which is more subtle than their light. Know also that the created world is composed of two dense things and two rare things, but nothing of the dense is in the sublime creature. Consequently the Sun is rarer than all inferior creatures.

The Turba answereth:- Thou hast excellently described what thou hast related. And if, good Master, thou shalt utter anything whereby our hearts may be vivified, which now are mortified by folly, thou wilt confer upon us a great boon!

The Eighth Dictum.

Pythagoras saith:- I affirm that God existed before all things, and with Him was nothing, as He was at first. But know, all ye Philosophers, that I declare this in order that I may fortify your opinion concerning these four elements and arcana, as well as in the sciences thereof, at which no one can arrive save by the will of God. Understand, that when God was alone, He created four things- fire, air, water, and earth, out of which things He afterwards created all

others, both the sublime and the inferior, because He predestinated from the beginning that all creatures extracted from water should multiply and increase, that they might dwell in the world and perform His judgments therein. Consequently, before all, He created the four elements, out of which He afterwards created what He willed, that is to say, diverse creatures, some of which were produced from a single element.

The Turba saith:- Which are these, O Master!

And he:- They are the angels, whom He created out of fire.

But the Turba:- Which, then, are created out of two?

And he:- Out of the elements of fire and air are the sun, moon, and stars composed. Hence the angels are more lucid than the sun, moon, and stars, because they are created from one substance, which is less dense than two, while the sun and the stars are created from a composition of fire and air.

The Turba saith:- And what concerning the creation of Heaven?

Then he:- God created the Heaven out of water and air, whence this is also composed of two, namely, the second of the rarer things, which is air, and the second of the denser things, which is water.

And they:- Master, continue thy discourse concerning these three, and rejoice our hearts with thy sayings, which are life to the dead.

But the other answereth:- I notify to you that God hath further made creatures out of three and out of four; out of three are created flying things, beasts, and vegetables; some of these are created out of water, air, and earth, some out of fire, air, and earth.

But the Turba saith:- Distinguish these divers creatures one from another.

And he:- Beasts are created out of fire, air, and earth; dying things out of fire, air, and water, because flying things, and all among vegetables which have a spirit, are created out of water, while all brute animals are from earth, air, and fire. Yet in vegetables there is no fire, for they are created out of earth, water, and air.

Whereat the Turba saith:- Let us assume that a fire, with your reverence's pardon, does reside in vegetables.

And he:- Ye have spoken the truth, and I affirm that they contain fire.

And they:- Whence is that fire?

He answereth:- Out of the heat of the air which is concealed therein; for I have signified that a thin fire is present in the air, but the elementary fire concerning which you were in doubt is not produced, except in things which have spirit and soul. But out of four elements our father Adam and his sons were created, that is, of fire, air, water, and likewise earth. Understand, all ye that are wise, how everything which God hath created out of one essence dies not until the

Day of Judgment. The definition of death is the disjunction of the composite, but there is no disjunction of that which is simple, for it is one. Death consists in the separation of the soul from the body, because anything formed out of two, three, or four components must disintegrate, and this is death. Understand, further, that no complex substance which lacks fire eats, drinks, or sleeps, because in all things which have a spirit fire is that which eats.

The Turba answereth:- How is it, Master, that the angels, being created of fire, do not eat, seeing thou assertest that fire is that which eats!

And he: Hence ye doubt, each having his opinion, and ye are become opponents, but if ye truly knew the elements, ye would not deny these things. I agree with all whose judgment it is that simple fire eats not, but thick fire. The angels, therefore, are not created out of thick fire, but out of the thinnest of very thin fire; being created, then, of that which is most simple and exceedingly thin, they neither eat, drink, nor sleep.

And the Turba:- Master, our faculties are able to perceive, for by God's assistance we have exhausted thy sayings, but our faculties of hearing and of sight are unable to carry such great things. May God reward thee for the sake of thy disciples, since it is with the object of instructing future generations that thou hast summoned us together from our countries, the recompense of which thou wilt not fail to receive from the Judge to come.

Arisleus saith:- Seeing that thou hast gathered us together for the advantage of posterity, I think that no explanations will be more useful than definitions of those four elements which thou hast taught us to attain.

And he:- None of you are, I suppose, ignorant that all the Wise have propounded definitions in God.

The Turba answereth:- Should your disciples pass over anything, it becomes you, O Master, to avoid omissions for the sake of future generations.

And he:- If it please you, I will begin the disposition here, since envious men in their books have separated that, or otherwise I will put it at the end of the book.

Whereat the Turba saith:- Place it where you think it will be dearest for future generations.

And he:- I will place it where it will not be recognised by the foolish, nor ignored by the Sons of the Doctrine, for it is the key, the perfection and the end.

The Ninth Dictum.

Eximenus saith:- God hath created all things by his word, having said unto them: Be, and they were made, with the four other elements, earth, water, air, and tire, which He coagulated, and things contrary were commingled, for we see that fire is hostile to water, water hostile to fire, and both are hostile to earth and air. Yet God hath united them peacefully, so that they love one another. Out of these four elements, therefore, are all things created- heaven and the throne thereof; the angels; the sun, moon. and stars; earth and sea, with all things that are in the sea, which indeed are various, and not alike, for their natures have been made diverse by

God, and also the creations. But the diversity is more than I have stated; each of these natures is of diverse nature, and by a legion of diversities is the nature of each diverse. Now this diversity subsists in all creatures, because they were created out of diverse elements. Had they been created out of one element, they would have been agreeing natures. But diverse elements being here mingled, they lose their own natures, because the dry being mixed with the humid and the cold combined with the hot, become neither cold nor hot; so also the humid being mixed with the dry becomes neither dry nor humid. But when the four elements are commingled, they agree, and thence proceed creatures which never attain to perfection, except they be left by night to putrefy and become visibly corrupt. God further completed his creation by means of increase, food, life, and government. Sons of the Doctrine, not without purpose have I described to you the disposition of these four elements, for in them is a secret arcanum; two of them are perceptible to the sense of touch and vision, and of these the operation and virtue are well known. These are earth and water. But there are two other elements which are neither visible nor tangible, which yield naught, whereof the place is never seen, nor are their operations and force known, save in the former elements, namely, earth and water; now when the four elements are not commingled, no desire of men is accomplished. But being mixed, departing from their own natures, they become another thing. Over these let us meditate very carefully.

And the Turba:- Master, if you speak, we will give heed to Your words.

Then he:- I have now discoursed, and that well. I will speak only useful words which ye will follow as spoken. Know, all present, that no true tincture is made except from our copper. Do not therefore, exhaust your brains and your money, lest ye fill your hearts with sorrow. I will give you a fundamental axiom, that unless you turn the aforesaid copper into white, and make visible coins and then afterwards again turn it into redness, until a Tincture: results, verily, ye accomplish nothing. Burn therefore the copper, break it up, deprive it of its blackness by cooking, imbuing, and washing, until the same becomes white. Then rule it.

The Tenth Dictum.

Arisleus saith:- Know that the key of this work is the art of Coins. Take, therefore, the body which I have shewn to you and reduce it to thin tablets. Next immerse the said tablets in the Water of our Sea, which is permanent Water, and, after it is covered, set it over a gentle fire until the tablets are melted and become waters or Etheliae, which are one and the same thing. Mix, cook, and simmer in a gentle fire until Brodium is produced, like to Saginatum. Then stir in its water of Etheliae until it be coagulated, and the coins become variegated, which we call the Flower of Salt. Cook it, therefore, until it be deprived of blackness, and the whiteness appear. Then rub it, mix with the Gum of Gold, and cook until it becomes red Etheliae. Use patience in pounding lest you become weary. Imbue the Ethelia with its own water, which has preceded from it, which also is Permanent Water, until the same becomes red. This, then, is Burnt Copper, which is the Leaven of Gold and the Flower thereof. Cook the same with Permanent Water, which is always with it, until the water be dried up. Continue the operation until all the water is consumed, and it becomes a most subtle powder.

The Eleventh Dictum.

Parmenides saith:- Ye must know that envious men have dealt voluminously with several waters, brodiums, stones, and metals, seeking to deceive all you who aspire after knowledge. Leave, therefore, all these, and make the white red, out of this our copper, taking copper and lead, letting these stand for the grease, or blackness, and tin for the liquefaction. Know ye, further, that unless ye rule the Nature of Truth, and harmonize well together its complexions and compositions, the consanguineous with the consanguineous, and the first with the first, ye act improperly and effect nothing, because natures will meet their natures, follow them, and rejoice. For in them they putrefy and are generated, because Nature is ruled by Nature, which destroys it, turns it into dust, reduces to nothing, and finally herself renews it, repeats, and frequently produces the same. Therefore look in books, that ye may know the Nature of Truth, what putrefies it and what renews, what savour it possesses, what neighbours it naturally has, and how they love each other, how also after love enmity and corruption intervene, and how these natures should be united one to another and made at peace, until they become gentle in the fire in similar fashion. Having, therefore, noticed the facts in this Art, set your hands to the work. If indeed, ye know not the Natures of Truth, do not approach the work, since there will follow nothing but harm, disaster, and sadness. Consider, therefore, the teaching of the Wise, how they have declared the whole work in this saying:- Nature rejoices in Nature, and Nature contains Nature. In these words there is shewn forth unto you the whole work. Leave, therefore, manifold and superfluous things, and take quicksilver, coagulate in the body of Magnesia, in Kuhul, or in Sulphur which does not burn; make the same nature white, and place it upon our Copper, when it becomes white. And if ye cook still more, it becomes red, when if ye proceed to coction, it becomes gold. I tell you that it turns the sea itself into red and the colour of gold. Know ye also that gold is not turned into redness save by Permanent Water, because Nature rejoices in Nature.: Reduce, therefore, the same by means of cooking into a humour, until the hidden nature appear. If, therefore, it be manifested externally, seven times imbue the same with water, cooking, imbuing, and washing, until it become red. O those celestial natures, multiplying the natures of truth by the will of God! O that potent Nature, which overcame and conquered natures, and caused its natures to rejoice and be glad! This, therefore, is that special and spiritual nature to which the God thereof can give what fire cannot. Consequently, we glorify and magnify that [species], than which nothing is more precious in the true tincture, or the like in the smallest degree to be found. This is that truth which those investigating wisdom love. For when it is liquefied with bodies, the highest operation is effected. If ye knew the truth, what great thanks ye would give me! Learn, therefore, that while you are tingeing the cinders, you must destroy those that are mixed. For it overcomes those which are mixed, and changes them to its own colour. And as it visibly overcame the surface, even so it mastered the interior. And if one be volatile but the other endure the fire, either joined to the other endures the fire. Know also, that if the vapours have whitened the surfaces, they will certainly whiten the interiors. Know further, all ye seekers after Wisdom, that one matter overcomes four, and our Sulphur alone consumes all things.

The Turba answereth: Thou hast spoken excellently well, O Parmenides, but thou hast not demonstrated the disposition of the smoke to posterity, nor how the same is whitened!

The Twelfth Dictum.

Lucas saith: I will speak at this time, following the steps of the ancients. Know, therefore, all ye seekers after Wisdom, that this treatise is not from the beginning of the ruling! Take quicksilver, which is from the male, and coagulate according to custom. Observe that I am speaking to you in accordance with custom, because it has been already coagulated. Here, therefore, is not the beginning of the ruling, but I prescribe this method, namely, that you shall take the quicksilver from the male, and shall either impose upon iron, tin, or governed copper, and it will be whitened. White Magnesia is made in the same way, and the male is converted with it. But forasmuch as there is a certain affinity between the magnet and the iron, therefore our nature rejoices.) Take, then, the vapour which the Ancients commanded you to take, and cook the same with its own body until tin is produced. Wash away its blackness according to custom, and cleanse and roast at an equable fire until it be whitened. But every body is whitened with governed quicksilver, for Nature converts Nature. Take, therefore, Magnesia, Water of Alum, Water of Nitre, Water of the Sea, and Water of Iron; whiten with smoke.: Whatsoever ye desire to be whitened is whitened with this smoke, because it is itself white, and whitens all things. Mix, therefore, the said smoke with its faeces until it be coagulated and become excessively white. Roast this white copper till it germinates of itself, since the Magnesia when whitened does not suffer the spirits to escape, or the shadow of copper to appear, because Nature contains Nature. Take, therefore, all ye Sons of the Doctrine, the white sulphureous nature, whiten with salt and dew, or with the Flower of White Salt, until it become excessively white. And know ye, that the Flower of White Salt is Ether from Ethelia. The same must be boiled for seven days, till it shall become like gleaming marble, for when it has reached this condition it is a very great Arcanum, seeing that Sulphur is mixed with Sulphur, whence an excellent work is accomplished, by reason of the affinity between them, because natures rejoice in meeting their own natures. Take, therefore, Mardek and whiten the same with Gadenbe, that is, wine and vinegar, and Permanent Water. Roast and coagulate until the whole does not liquefy in a fire stronger than its own, namely, the former fire. Cover the mouth of the vessel securely, but let it be associated with its neighbour, that it may kindle the whiteness thereof, and beware lest the fire blaze up, for in this case it becomes red prematurely, and this will profit you nothing, because in the beginning of the ruling you require the white. Afterwards coagulate the same until you attain the red. Let your fire be gentle in the whitening, until coagulation take place. Know that when it is coagulated we call it the Soul, and it is more quickly converted from nature into nature. This, therefore, is sufficient for those who deal with the Art of Coins, because one thing makes it but many operate therein. For ye need not a number of things, but one thing only, which in each and every grade of your work is changed into another nature.

The Turba saith: Master, if you speak as the Wise have spoken, and that briefly, they will follow you who do not wish to be wholly shut in with darkness.

The Thirteenth Dictum.

Pythagoras saith:- We posit another government which is not from another root, but it differs in name. And know, all ye seekers after this Science and Wisdom, that whatsoever the

envious may have enjoined in their books concerning the composition of natures which agree together, in savour there is only one, albeit to sight they are as diverse as possible. Know, also, that the thing which they have described in so many ways follows and attains its companion without fire, even as the magnet follows the iron, to which the said thing is not vainly compared, nor to a seed, nor to a matrix, for it is also like unto these. And this same thing, which follows its companion without fire, causes many colours to appear when embracing it, for this reason, that the said one thing enters into every regimen, and is found everywhere, being a stone, and also not a stone; common and precious; hidden and concealed, yet known by everyone; of one name and of many names, which is the Spume of the Moon. This stone, therefore, is not a stone, because it is more precious; without it Nature never operates anything; its name is one, yet we have called it by many names on account of the excellence of its nature.

The Turba answereth:- O! Master! wilt thou not mention some of those names for the guidance of seekers?

And he:- It is called White Ethelia, White Copper, and that which flies from the fire and alone whitens copper. Break up, therefore, the White Stone, and afterwards coagulate it with milk. Then pound the calx in the mortar, taking care that the humidity does not escape from the vessel; but coagulate it in the vessel until it shall become a cinder. Cook also with Spume of Luna and regulate. For ye shall find the stone broken, and already imbued with its own water. This, therefore, is the stone which we call by all names, which assimilates the work and drinks it, and is the stone out of which also all colours appear. Take, therefore, that same gum, which is from the scoriae, and mix with cinder of calx, which you have ruled, and with the faeces which you know, moistening with permanent water. Then look and see whether it has become a powder, but if not, roast in a fire stronger than the first fire, until it be pounded. Then imbue with permanent water, and the more the colours vary all the more suffer them to be heated. Know, moreover, that if you take white quicksilver, or the Spume of Luna, and do as ye are bidden, breaking up with a gentle fire, the same is coagulated, and becomes a stone. Out of this stone, therefore, when it is broken up, many colours will appear to you. But herein, if any ambiguity occur to you in our discourse, do as ye are bidden, ruling the same until a white and coruscating stone shall be produced, and so ye find your purpose.

The Fourteenth Dictum.

Acsubofen saith:- Master, thou hast spoken without envy, even as became thee, and for the same may God reward thee!

Pythagoras saith:- May God also deliver thee, Acsubofen, from envy!

Then he:- Ye must know, O Assembly of the Wise, that sulphurs are contained in sulphurs, and humidity in humidity.

The Turba answereth:- The envious, O Acsubofen, have uttered something like unto this! Tell us, therefore, what is this humidity?

And he:- Humidity is a venom, and when venom penetrates a body, it tinges it with an invariable colour, and in no wise permits the soul to be separated from the body, because it is equal thereto. Concerning this, the envious have said: When one flies and the other pursues, then one seizes upon the other, and afterwards they no longer flee, because Nature has laid hold of its equal, after the manner of an enemy, and they destroy one another. For this reason, out of the sulphureous mixed sulphur is produced a most precious colour, which varies not, nor flees from the fire, when the soul enters into the interior of the body and holds the body together and tinges it. I will repeat my words in Tyrian dye. Take the Animal which is called Kenckel, since all its water is a Tyrian colour, and rule the same with a gentle fire, as is customary, until it shall become earth, in which there will be a little colour. But if you wish to obtain the Tyrian tincture, take the humidity which that thing has ejected, and place it therewith gradually in a vessel, adding that tincture whereof the colour was disagreeable to you. Then cook with that same marine water until it shall become dry. Afterwards moisten with that humour, dry gradually, and cease not to imbue it, to cook, and to dry, until it be imbued with all its humour. Then leave it for several days in its own vessel, Until the most precious Tyrian colour shall come out from it to the surface. Observe how I describe the regimen to you! Prepare it with the urine of boys, with water of the sea, and with permanent clean water, so that it may be tinged, and decoct with a gentle fire, until the blackness altogether shall depart from it, and it be easily pounded. Decoct, therefore, in its own humour until it clothe itself with a red colour. But if ye wish to bring it to the Tyrian colour, imbue the same with continual water, and mix, as ye know to be sufficient, according to the rule of sight; mix the same with permanent water sufficiently, and decoct until rust absorb the water. Then wash with the water of the sea which thou hast prepared, which is water of desiccated calx; cook until it imbibe its own moisture; and do this day by day. I tell you that a colour will thence appear to you the like of which the Tyrians have never made. And if ye wish that it should be a still more exalted colour, place the gum in the permanent water, with which ye shall dye it alternately, and afterwards desiccate in the sun. Then restore to the aforesaid water and the black Tyrian colour is intensified. But know that ye do not tinge the purple colour except by cold. Take, therefore, water which is of the nature of cold, and steep wool therein until it extract the force of the tincture from the water. Know also that the Philosophers have called the force which proceeds from that water the Flower. Seek, therefore, your intent in the said water; therein place what is in the vessel for days and nights, until it be clothed with a most precious Tyrian colour.

The Fifteenth Dictum.

Frictes saith:- O all ye seekers after Wisdom, know that the foundation of this Art, on account of which many have perished, is one only. There is one thing which is stronger than all natures, and more sublime in the opinion of philosophers, whereas with fools it is more common than anything. But for us it is a thing which we reverence. Woe unto all ye fools! How ignorant are ye of this Art, for which ye would die if ye knew it! I swear to you that if kings were familiar with it, none of us would ever attain this thing. O how this nature changeth body into spirit! O how admirable is Nature, how she presides over all, and overcomes all!

Pythagoras saith:- Name this Nature, O Frictes!

And he:- It is a very sharp vinegar, which makes gold into sheer spirit, without which vinegar, neither whiteness, nor blackness, nor redness, nor rust can be made. And know ye that when it is mixed with the body, it is contained therein, and becomes one therewith; it turns the same into a spirit, and tinges with a spiritual and invariable tincture, which is indelible. Know, also, that if ye place the body over the fire without vinegar, it will be burnt and corrupted. And know, further, that the first humour is cold. Be careful, therefore, of the fire, which is inimical to cold. Accordingly, the Wise have said: "Rule gently until the sulphur becomes incombustible." The Wise men have already shewn to those who possess reason the disposition of this Art, and the best point of their Art, which they mentioned, is, that a little of this sulphur burns a strong body. Accordingly they venerate it and name it in the beginning of their book, and the son of Adam thus described it. For this vinegar burns the body, converts it into a cinder, and also whitens the body, which, if ye cook well and deprive of blackness, is changed into a stone, so that it becomes a coin of most intense whiteness. Cook, therefore, the stone until it be disintegrated, and then dissolve and temper with water of the sea. Know also, that the beginning of the whole work is the whitening, to which succeeds the redness, finally the perfection of the work; but after this, by means of vinegar, and by the will of Gcd, there follows a complete perfection, Now, I have shewn to you, O disciples of this Turba, the disposition of the one thing, which is more perfect, more precious, and more honourable, than all natures, and I swear to you by God that I have searched for a long time in books so that I might arrive at the knowledge of this one thing, while I prayed also to God that he would teach me what it is. My prayer was heard, He shewed me clean water, whereby I knew pure vinegar, and the more I did read books, the more was I illuminated.

The Sixteenth Dictum.

Socrates saith:- Know, O crowd of those that still remain of the Sons of the Doctrine, that no tincture can be produced without Lead, which possesses the required virtue. Have ye not seen how thrice-great Hermes infused the red into the body, and it was changed into an invariable colour? Know, therefore, that the first virtue is vinegar, and the second is the Lead of which the Wise have spoken, which if it be infused into all bodies, renders all unchangeable, and tinges them with an invariable colour. Take, therefore, Lead which is made out of the stone called Kuhul; let it be of the best quality, and let it be cooked till it becomes black. Then pound the same with Water of Nitre until it is thick like grease, and cook again in a very bright fire until the spissitude of the body is destroyed, the water being rejected. Kindle, therefore, above it until the stone becomes clean, abounding in precious metal, and exceedingly white. Pound it afterwards with dew and the sun, and with sea and rain water for 31 days, for 10 days with salt water, and 10 days with fresh water, when ye shall find the same like to a metallic stone. Cook the same once more with water of nitre until it become tin by liquefaction. Again cook until it be deprived of moisture, and become dry. But know that when it becomes dry it drinks up what remains of its humour swiftly, because it is burnt lead. Take care, however, lest it be burnt. Thus we call it incombustible sulphur. Pound the same with the sharpest vinegar, and cook till it becomes thick, taking care lest the vinegar be changed into smoke and perish; continue this coction for 150 days. Now, therefore, I have

demonstrated the disposition of the white lead, all which afterwards follows being no more than women's work and child's play. Know, also, that the arcanum of the work of gold proceeds out of the male and the female, but I have shewn you the male in the lead, while, in like manner, I have discovered for you the female in orpiment. Mix, therefore, the orpiment with the lead, for the female rejoices in receiving the strength of the male, because she is assisted by the male. But the male receives a tingeing spirit from the female. Mix them, therefore, together, place in a glass vessel, and pound with Ethelia and very sharp vinegar; cook for seven days, taking care lest the arcanum smoke away, and leave throughout the night. But if ye wish it to put on mud (colour), seeing that it is already dry, again imbue with vinegar. Now, therefore, I have notified to you the power of orpiment, which is the woman by whom is accomplished the most great arcanum. Do not shew these unto the evil, for they will laugh. It is the Ethelia of vinegar which is placed in the preparation, by which things God perfects the work, whereby also spirits take possession of bodies, and they become spiritual.

The Seventeenth Dictum.

Zimon saith:- O Turba of Philosophers and disciples, now hast thou spoken about making into white, but it yet remains to treat concerning the reddening! Know, all ye seekers after this Art, that unless ye whiten, ye cannot make red, because the two natures are nothing other than red and white. Whiten, therefore, the red, and redden the white! Know, also, that the year is divided into four seasons; the first season is of a frigid complexion, and this is Winter; the second is of the complexion of air, and this is Spring; then follows the third, which is summer, and is of the complexion of fire; lastly, there is the fourth, wherein fruits are matured, which is Autumn. In this manner, therefore, ye are to rule your natures, namely, to dissolve ill winter, to cook in spring, to coagulate in summer, and to gather and tinge the fruit in autumn. Having, therefore, given this example, rule the tingeing natures, but if ye err, blame no one save yourselves.

The Turba answereth:- Thou hast treated the matter extremely well; add, therefore, another teaching of this kind for the sake of posterity.

And he:- I will speak of making lead red. Take the copper which the Master ordered you to take at the beginning of his book, combine lead therewith, and cook it until it becomes thick; congeal also and desiccate until it becomes red. Here certainly is the Red Lead of which the wise spake; copper and lead become a precious stone; mix them equally, let gold be roasted with them, for this, if ye rule well, becomes a tingeing spirit in spirits. So when the male and the female are conjoined there is not produced a volatile wife, but a spiritual composite. From the composite turned into a red spirit is produced the beginning of the world. Behold this is the lead which we have called Red Lead, which is of our work, and without which nothing is effected!

The Eighteenth Dictum.

Mundus saith to the Turba:- The seekers after this Art must know that the Philosophers in their books have described gum in many ways, but it is none other than permanent water, out of which our precious stone is generated. O how many are the seekers after this gum, and

how few there are who find it! Know that this gum is not ameliorated except by gold alone. For there be very many who investigate these applications, and they find certain things, yet they cannot sustain the labours because they are diminished. But the applications which are made out of the gum and out of the honourable stone, which has already held the tincture, they sustain the labours, and are never diminished. Understand, therefore, my words, for I will explain unto you the applications of this gum, and the arcanum existing therein. Know ye that our gum is stronger than gold, and all those who know it do hold it more honourable than gold, yet gold we also honour, for without it the gum cannot be improved. Our gum, therefore, is for Philosophers more precious and more sublime than pearls, because out of gum with a little gold we buy much. Consequently, the Philosophers, when committing these things to writing that the same might not perish, have not set forth in their books the manifest disposition, lest every one should become acquainted therewith, and having become familiar to fools, the same would not sell it at a small price. Take, therefore, one part of the most intense white gum; one part of the urine of a white calf; one part of the gall of a fish; and one part of the body of gum, without which it cannot be improved; mix these portions and cook for forty days. When these things have been done, congeal by the heat of the sun till they are dried. Then cook the same, mixed with milk of ferment, until the milk fail; afterwards extract it, and until it become dry evaporate the moisture by heat. Then mix it with milk of the fig, and cook it till that moisture be dried up in the composite, which afterwards mix with milk of the root of grass, and again cook until it be dry. Then moisten it with rainwater, then sprinkle with water of dew, and cook until it be dried. Also imbue with permanent water, and desiccate until it become of the most intense dryness. Having done these things: mix the same with the gum which is equipped with all manner of colours, and cook strongly until the whole force of the water perish; and the entire body be deprived of its humidity, while ye imbue the same by cooking, until the dryness thereof be kindled. Then dismiss for forty days. Let it remain in that trituration or decocting until the spirit penetrate the body. For by this regimen the spirit is made corporeal, and the body is changed into a spirit. Observe the vessel, therefore, lest the composition fly and pass off in fumes. These things being accomplished, open the vessel, and ye will find that which ye purposed. This, therefore, is the arcanum of gum, which the Philosophers have concealed in their books.

The Nineteenth Dictum.

Dardaris saith:- It is common knowledge that the Masters before us have described Permanent Water. Now, it behoves one who is introduced to this Art to attempt nothing till he is familiar with the power of this Permanent Water, and in commixture, contrition, and the whole regimen, it behoves us to use invariably this famous Permanent Water. He, therefore, who does not understand Permanent Water, and its indispensable regimen, may not enter into this Art, because nothing is effected without the Permanent Water. The force thereof is a spiritual blood, whence the Philosophers have called it Permanent Water, for, having pounded it with the body, as the Masters before me have explained to you, by the will of God it turns that body into spirit. For these, being mixed together and reduced to one, transform each other; the body incorporates the spirit, and the spirit incorporates the body into tinged

spirit, like blood. And know ye, that whatsoever hath spirit the same hath blood also as well. Remember, therefore, this arcanum!

The Twentieth Dictum.

Belus saith:- O disciples, ye have discoursed excellently!

Pythagoras answers:- Seeing that they are philosophers, O Belus, why hast thou called them disciples?

He answereth:- It is in honour of their Master, lest I should make them equal with him.

Then Pythagoras saith:- Those who, in conjunction with us, have composed this book which is called the Turba, ought not to be termed disciples.

Then he:- Master, they have frequently described Permanent Water, and the making of the White and the Red in many ways, albeit under many names; but in the modes after which they have conjoined weights, compositions, and regimens, they agree with the hidden truth. Behold, what is said concerning this despised thing! A report has gone abroad that the Hidden Glory of the Philosophers is a stone and not a stone, and that it is called by many names, lest the foolish should recognise it, Certain wise men have designated it after one fashion, namely, according to the place where it is generated; others have adopted another, founded upon its colour, some of whom have termed it the Green Stone; by other some it is called the Stone of the most intense Spirit of Brass, not to be mixed with bodies; by yet others its description has been further varied, because it is sold for coins by lapidaries who are called saven; some have named it Spume of Luna; some have distinguished it astronomically or arithmetically; it has already received a thousand titles, of which the best is: "That which is produced out of metals." So also others have called it the Heart of the Sun, and yet others have declared it to be that which is brought forth out of quicksilver with the milk of volatile things.

The Twenty-first Dictum.

Pandolfus saith:- O Belus, thou hast said so much concerning the despised stone that thou hast left nothing to be added by thy brethren! Howsoever, I teach posterity that this despised stone is a permanent water, and know, all ye seekers after Wisdom, that permanent water is water of mundane life, because, verily, Philosophers have stated that Nature rejoices in Nature, Nature contains Nature, and Nature overcomes Nature. The Philosophers have constituted this short dictum the principle of the work for reasonable persons. And know ye that no body is more precious or purer than the Sun, and that no tingeing venom: is generated without the Sun and its shadow. He, therefore, who attempts to make the venom of the Philosophers without these, already errs, and has fallen into that pit wherein his sadness remains. But he who has tinged the venom of the wise out of the Sun and its shadow has arrived at the highest Arcanum. Know also that our coin when it becomes red, is called gold; he, therefore, who knows the hidden Cambar of the Philosophers, to him is the Arcanum already revealed.

The Turba answereth:- Thou hast even now intelligibly described this stone, yet thou hast not narrated its regimen nor its composition. Return, therefore, to the description.

He saith:- I direct you to take an occult and honourable arcanum, which is White Magnesia, and the same is mixed and pounded with wine, but take care not to make use of this except it be pure and clean; finally place it in its vessel, and pray God that He may grant you the sight of this very great stone. Then cook gradually, and, extracting, see if it has become a black stone, in which case ye have ruled excellently well. But rule it thus for the white, which is a great arcanum, until it becomes Kuhul, closed up with blackness, which blackness see that it does not remain longer than forty days. Pound the same, therefore, with its confections, which are the said flower of copper, gold of the Indies whose root is one, and a certain extract of an unguent, that is, of a crocus, that is, fixed exalted alum; cook the four, therefore, permanently for 40 or 42 days. After these days God will show you the principle(or beginning) of this stone, which is the stone Atitos, of which favoured sight of God there are many accounts. Cook strongly, and imbue with the gum that remains. And know ye that so often as ye imbue the cinder, so often must it be desiccated and again humectated, until its colour turns into that which ye desire. Now, therefore, will I complete that which I have begun, if God will look kindly on us. Know also that the perfection of the work of this precious stone is to rule it with the residue of the third part of the medicine, and to preserve the two other parts for imbuing and cooking alternately till the required colour appears. Let the fire be more intense than the former; let the matter be cerated, and when it is desiccated it coheres. Cook, therefore, the wax until it imbibes the gluten of gold, which being desiccated, imbue the rest of the work seven times until the other two thirds be finished, and true earth imbibe them all. Finally, place the same on a hot fire until the earth extract its flower and be satisfactory. Blessed are ye if ye understand! But, if not, I will repeat to you the perfection of the work. Take the clean white, which is a most great arcanum, wherein is the true tincture; imbue sand therewith, which sand is made out of the stone seven times imbued, until it drink up the whole, and close the mouth of the vessel effectually, as you have often been told. For that which ye seek of it by the favour of God, will appear to you, which is the stone of Tyrian colour. Now, therefore, I have fulfilled the truth, so do I conjure you by God and your sure Master, that you show not this great arcanum, and beware of the wicked!

The Twenty-Second Dictum.

Theophilus saith: Thou hast spoken intelligently and elegantly, and art held free from envy.

Saith the Turba:- Let your discretion, therefore, explain to us what the instructing Pandolfus has stated, and be not envious.

Then he:- O all ye seekers after this science, the arcanum of gold and the art of the coin is a dark vestment, and no one knows what the Philosophers have narrated in their books without frequent reading, experiments, and questionings of the Wise. For that which they have concealed is more sublime and obscure than it is possible to make known in words, and albeit some have dealt with it intelligibly and well, certain others have treated it obscurely; thus some are more lucid than others.

The Turba answereth: Thou hast truly spoken.

And he:- I announce to posterity that between boritis and copper there is an affinity, because the boritis of the Wise liquefies; the copper, and it changes as a fluxible water. Divide, therefore, the venom into two equal parts, with one of which liquefy the copper, but preserve the other to Pound and imbue the same, until it is drawn out into plates; cook again with the former part of the venom, cook two to seven in two; cook to seven in its own water for 42 days; finally, open the vessel, and ye shall find copper turned into quicksilver; wash the same by cooking until it be deprived of its blackness, and become as copper without a shadow. Lastly, cook it continuously until it be congealed. For when it is congealed it becomes a very great arcanum. Accordingly, the Philosophers have called this stone Boritis; cook, therefore, that coagulated stone until it becomes a matter like mucra. Then imbue it with the Permanent water which I directed you to reserve, that is to say, with the other portion, and cook it many times until its colours manifest. This, therefore, is the very great putrefaction which extracts (or contains in itself) the very great arcanum.

Saith the Turba:- Return to thine exposition, O Theophilus!

And he:- It is to be known that the same affinity which exists between the magnet and iron, also exists assuredly between copper and permanent water. If, therefore, ye rule copper and permanent water as I have directed, there will thence result the very great arcanum in the following fashion. Take white Magnesia and quicksilver, mix with the male, and pound strongly by cooking, not with the hands, until the water become thin. But dividing this water into two parts, in the one part of the water cook it for eleven, otherwise, forty days, until there be a white flower, as the flower of salt in its splendour and coruscation: but strongly close the mouth of the vessel, and cook for forty days, when ye will find it water whiter than milk; deprive it of all blackness by cooking; continue the cooking until its whole nature be disintegrated, until the defilement perish, until it be found clean, and is wholly broken up (or becomes wholly clean). But if ye wish that the whole arcanum, which I have given you, be accomplished, wash the same with water, that is to say, the other part which I counselled you to preserve, until there appear a crocus, and leave in its own vessel. For the Iksir pounds (or contains) itself; imbue also with the residue of the water, until by decoction and by water it be pounded and become like a syrup of pomegranates; imbue it, therefore, and cook, until the weight of the humidity shall fail, and the colour which the Philosophers have magnified shall truly appear.

The Twenty-third Dictum.

Cerus saith:- Understand, all ye Sons of the Doctrine, that which Theophilus hath told you, namely, that there exists an affinity between the magnet and the iron, by the alliance of composite existing between the magnet and the iron, while the copper is fitly ruled for one hundred days: what statement can be more useful to you than that there is no affinity between tin and quicksilver!

The Turba answereth:- Thou hast ill spoken, having disparaged the true disposition.

And he:- I testify that I say nothing but what is true why are you incensed against me Fear the Lord, all ye Turba, that you Master may believe you!

The Turba answereth:- Say what you will.

And he:- I direct you to take quicksilver, in which is the male potency or strength; cook the same with its body until it becomes a fluxible water; cook the masculine together with the vapour, until each shall be coagulated and become a stone. Then take the water which you had divided into two parts, of which one is for liquefying and cooking the body, but the second is for cleansing that which is already burnt, and its companion, which [two] are made one. Imbue the stone seven times, and cleanse, until it be disintegrated, and its body be purged from all defilement, and become earth. Know also that in the time of forty-two days the whole is changed into earth; by cooking, therefore, liquefy the same until it become as true water, which is quicksilver. Then wash with water of nitre until it become as a liquefied coin. Then cook until it be congealed and become like to tin, when it is a most great arcanum; that is to say, the stone which is out of two things. Rule the same by cooking and pounding, until it becomes a most excellent crocus. Know also that unto water desiccated with its companion we have given the name of crocus. Cook it, therefore, and imbue with the residual water reserved by you until you attain your purpose.

The Twenty-fourth Dictum.

Bocascus saith:- Thou hast spoken well, O Belus, and therefore I follow thy steps!

He answereth:- As it may please you, but do not become envious, for that is not the part of the Wise.

And Bocascus:- Thou speakest the truth, and thus, therefore, I direct the Sons of the Doctrine. Take lead, and, as the Philosophers have ordained, imbue, liquefy, and afterwards congeal, until a stone is produced; then rule the stone with gluten of gold and syrup of pomegranates until it be broken up. But you have already divided the water into two parts, with one of which you have liquefied the lead, and it has become as water; cook, therefore, the same until it be dried and have become earth; then pound with the water reserved until it acquire a red colour, as you have been frequently ordered.

The Turba answereth:- Thou hast done nothing but pile up ambiguous words. Return, therefore, to the subject.

And he:- Ye who wish to coagulate quicksilver, must mix it with its equal. Afterwards cook it diligently until both become permanent water, and, again, cook this water until it be coagulated. But let this be desiccated with its own equal vapour, because ye have found the whole quicksilver to be coagulated by itself. If ye understand, and place in your vessel what is necessary, cook it until it be coagulated, and then pound until it becomes a crocus like to the colour of gold.

The Twenty-fifth Dictum.

Menabdus saith:- May God reward thee for the regimen, since thou speakest the truth! For thou hast illuminated thy words.

And they:- It is said because thou praisest him for his sayings, do not be inferior to him.

And he:- I know that I can utter nothing but that which he hath uttered; however, I counsel posterity to make bodies not bodies, but these incorporeal things bodies. For by this regimen the composite is prepared, and the hidden part of its nature is extracted. With these bodies accordingly join quicksilver and the body of Magnesia, the woman also with the man, and by means of this there is extracted our secret Ethelia, through which bodies are coloured; assuredly, if I understand this regimen, bodies become not bodies, and incorporeal things become bodies. If ye diligently pound the things in the fire and digest (or join to) the Ethelias, they become clean and fixed things. And know ye that quicksilver is a fire burning the bodies, mortifying and breaking up, with one regimen, and the more it is mixed and pounded with the body, the more the body is disintegrated, while the quicksilver is attenuated and becomes living. For when ye shall diligently pound fiery quicksilver and cook it as required, ye will possess Ethel, a fixed nature and colour, subject to every tincture, which also overcomes, breaks, and constrains the fire. For this reason it does not colour things unless it be coloured, and being coloured it colours. And know that no body can tinge itself unless its spirit be extracted from the secret belly thereof, when it becomes a body and soul without the spirit, which is a spiritual tincture, out of which colours have manifested, seeing that a dense thing does not tinge a tenuous, but a tenuous nature colours that which enters into a body. When, however, ye have ruled the body of copper, and have extracted from it a most tenuous (subject), then the latter is changed into a tincture by which it is coloured. Hence has the wise man said, that copper does not tinge unless first it be tinged. And know that those four bodies which you are directed to rule are this copper, and that the tinctures which I have signified unto you are the condensed and the humid, but the condensed is a conjoined vapour, and the humid is the water of sulphur, for sulphurs are contained by sulphurs, and rightly by these things Nature rejoices in Nature, and overcomes, and constrains.

Marsilio Ficino on the alchemical art

Chapter 1.
Of the generation of metals in the bowels of the earth.

The opinion and determination of all who philosophize rightly is the same: that all metals are generated by the vapour of sulphur, and of argent vive. Because when the fat of the earth being heated, finds the substance of water somewhat globulous, it as well by its natural virtue, as by the rays of the celestial bodies and the endeavor of heaven, as according to the purity or impurity of each, consolidated it in the veins of the earth into those most beautiful bodies, gold, silver, copper, tin, iron, and lead.

Chapter 2.
Of Nature and art.

But there are in the arch of this world, two efficient causes, Nature and art. Nature daily produces and generates new things. But art by conception, making an impression of the similitudes of those things upon herself, does in an admirable manner prosecute the footsteps and delineations of Nature. So that if the wit of man do not sometime assist in some things, it is evident that Nature herself had gone astray from her operation. Or art sometimes does by the help of Nature, correct, supply and in a manner (especially in this magnificent discourse of mineral things) seems to exceed Nature. Which has already been long since consecrated to perpetual memory by those ancient Philosophers.
There are two sorts of Philosophers. Some only searching into Nature by herself, have in the monuments of their writings delivered the virtue and power which sublunary things have, as well from the elemental qualities, as from heaven and the stars; as the physicians are. And some others who have described the natures of animals, trees, herbs, metals, and precious stones. But others truly are more glorious, penetrating most sagaciously and sharply not only into Nature, but finally into the arcanum itself of Nature, and into her more inward recesses, have by a truer title assumed to themselves the name of philosopher. But because Nature produces all metals out of two things sulphur and Mercury, and has left us the superior bodies generated out of them, with the inferior bodies, certain is it is that the industrious may make the same out of her three operations, and reduce the inferior bodies to the Nature and perfection of the superior bodies.

Chapter 3.
Refutes an opinion of some in this art, and the philosophical art is laid down in a very few words.

And because by most of the studious in philosophy it is granted that metals themselves are generated of sulphur and Mercury, some have judged that sulphur and Mercury, since they are the root and matter of metals, ought to be taken and so long decocted, until they were conglutinated together into a metallic body. These truly had they descended deeper into nature's sanctuary, would never have come to such foolish opinions. For though sulphur and Mercury were as it were the root of metals before the first coagulation, yet now they are not, since they are brought to another nature: whence it remains that there cannot be made out of them any metallic body. Since also the chain is unknown, by which Venus and Mercury copulated together in due proportion. Wherefore they are not to be taken, but rather that which is out of them fully decocted in the womb of the earth, and that truly the most pure; whose like you will not find in a vegetable nature.
It is evident that all little trees, flowers and small herbs are produced from water and the union of a subtle earth. And if you endeavor to produce a tree or an herb, you must not take earth or water, but rather that which is from them, as a scion or a seed, which being committed to the bosom of the earth, the parent of all things, and cherished with a nutriment of their own nature, and called forth by the darting of the solar light, do in due time break out into the superficies of the earth, into the species of a tree or an herb. In like manner that divine art teaches how to take the seed our of the more perfect body; which being put into the philosophical earth prepared by art and continually decocted by a temperate heat into a white or red powder, is said to have converted the inferior bodies into the nature of the superior.

Chapter 4.
Delivers why the Philosophers have sought for this art ,not moved them to it, and this question is resolved: why the spirit in metals cannot propagate its like, since the spirit of everything is the author of generation.

But we readily affirm that the inspiration of God was the chief cause why those ancient philosophers searched after this science. For the philosophers seeing that all vegetable and animal things, as also other things, do by a certain spirit of their own multiply themselves, and that a transmutation is in this inferior world made by the air, which seemed in a long time to corrupt all particular things, and that their nature changed itself by the motions of another thing: There arose among them this question: namely why the spirit in metals could not propagate its like, since out of one scion there grew many, and out of one little grain almost innumerable grains did multiply themselves. It was at length decreed by the divine oracle, that the spirit was withheld by a grosser matter, which spirit if it were separated by a certain sublimation at the firesn and being separated were preserved in its own connatural seat, it might as a seminal virtue, without any untruth, generate its like. From hence the philosophers thought to bring the light and lustre of the most perfect body into the inferior bodies since they had found that they differed among themselves only according to the decoction, either greater or less, and the mercury was the first original of all metals, with which mercury extracting the metallic part of gold, they brought gold to the first nature. Which reduction indeed since it is easy and possible, it was by the philosophers concluded that a transmutation in metals is easy and possible. And when these primitive philosophers had reduced gold into the first matter, they made use of the celestial influence, that it might not be made a metal again such as it was before. Afterward they purified its nature, separating the unclean from the clean. Which being done they called that thing, the transmuting stone of the philosophers. For the making whereof several operations have been invented by several philosophers, that that might be completed by art which was left by Nature; since Nature herself is always inclined toward her own perfection.

Chapter 5.
Treats of what the philosophers stone is, and discourses first of its first part.

And because the philosophers had so obscurely set forth this science in strange involvings of words and shadows of figures, the stone of the philosophers was doubted by a very many men. Which it is of what things made? But if you will mind diligently, we divide the stone into two parts. The first part we say is terrestrial Sol, wherein both the ancient philosophers and the more modern do plainly agree with me in their testimonies in the Turba. Without terrestrial Sol the physical work is not perfected. Since they all assert that there is no true tincture without their Ã†s brass because in that there is the most pure sulphur of the wise, in which sage Nature contains her seed. And as the sun diffuses and darts down most lively and penetrating rays on this elementary world: So the stone of the philosophers being by a physical operation made out of gold, the son, as I may say, of the sun, disperses itself into other metals, and will forever equalize them to himself in virtue, color, and weight. And because all metals, we deservedly take gold before others. For since we would make gold and silver, it is necessary to take the same. Man is generated out of man, a tree from a tree, and

herb produces an herb, and a lion a lion; since each thing according to the temper of its nature, which they call the completion, generates and produces its like. Yet the philosophers more truly do not make gold or silver, but Nature cleansed by the skill of the operator.

Chapter 6.
Treats of the second part of the stone, where the spirit is compared to the most glorious virgin Saint Mary.

We say the mercury vive is the second part of the stone. Which since it is living and crude, is said to dissolve the bodies themselves, because it naturally adheres to them in their profundity. This is the stone without which Nature operates nothing. Whence the philosophers advise us not to work but in Sol and mercury; which being joined make up the stone of the philosophers. Who therefore can deservedly praise the merits of mercury, since it is he alone who maketh gold thin and who has so great a power, that he can reduce Sol itself into the first nature? Which power nothing else in the world is discerned to have. It is thus said of the mercury which the wise men seek for, is in mercury. Mercury destroys all foliated Sol: it dissolves and softens it, and takes the soul out of the body. If it be sublimated, then there is made aqua vitae. If any one therefore ask you: What are the stones? You shall answer, that Sol and mercury are the physical stones. But these stones are dead on Earth and operate nothing, but what is by the industry of men supplied to them.
I will propose you a similitude of gold. The ethereal heaven was shut from all men, so that all men should descend to the infernal seats, and be there perpetually detained. But Jesus Christ opened the gate of the ethereal Olympus, and has now unlocked the kingdoms of Pluto, that the souls may be taken out; when by the co-operation of the holy spirit in the virginal womb, the virgin Mary did by an ineffable mystery and most profound sacraments conceive what was the most excellent in the heavens and on the earth; and at length brought forth for us the saviour of the whole world, who out of his super abundant bounty shall save all who are able to sin, if the sinner turn himself to him. But she remained an untouched and undefiled virgin: whence mercury is not undeservedly compared to the most glorious saint the virgin Mary. For mercury is a virgin because it never propagated in the womb of the Earth and metallic body, and yet it generates the stone for us; by dissolving heaven, that is, gold, it opens it, and brings out the soul; which understand you to be the divinity, and carries it some little while in its womb, and at length in its own time transmits it into a cleansed body. From whence a child, that is, the stone, is born to us, by whose blood the inferior bodies being tinged are brought safe into the golden heaven, and mercury remains a virgin without a stain, such as is was ever before.

Chapter 7.
Determines why the philosophers have hidden this knowledge: where the praise of the art is set down, and he inveighs against Zoilus the Carper as the philosophers.

But Hamul in Senior declares the chief cause why the philosophers have delivered this art down to posterity and the sons of wisdom, by uncertain similitudes and obscure allegories: that they might attribute it to the glorious God who might reveal it to whom he would, and prohibit it from whom he would. Rasis also in the book, 'The Light of Lights', reports: For if I

should explain all things according to what they are, there would be no further occasion of prudence, but the fool would be made equal to the wise man. We read also in the end of the Turba: For unless the names were multiplied in this physical art, children would deride our knowledge. Wherefore we do not much value those who cavill at our divine art as adulterate; from which the most famous philosophers used to take all the knowledge of almost all things; as heretofore the statuaries did the thefts and the threads of our art, from the statue of Polycletus. It would also be most absurd to suspect that those ancient philosophers of venerable authority, especially in this discourse of natural things, have delivered down anything of falsehood to posterity, who employed their chiefest labour in inquiring after truth, although they ascended not to the sublimeness of the saving nature of faith, and the greatest height of the divine essence. Who therefore, but Zoilus, would not praise this science, and particularly favor it? From whence almost all the arts of these detractors are taken: from which so many colors very useful for the art of picture drawing derive their beginning, I say nothing of the art of money making: I pass by the learned distillation of the physicians, whereby they use to draw out the virtue, which they call a Quintessence. Which shall I say of those brazen vessels wherewith we make lightening and thunder among men? If they did but use them only against the sacrilegious enemies of the christian faith.

Besides the science of the stone is so sublime and magnificent, that therein almost all Nature and the whole universe of beings is beheld, as in a certain clear looking glass. For it is like a lesser world, where there are the four elements, and a fifth essence, which they call heaven in which another most noble essence has placed its seat, which some philosophers have used to compare (with reverence be it spoken) to the omnipotent God, and the most holy and undivided Trinity. Which is neither of the nature of the heaven, nor of the natures of the elements: and they have called it by a particular name, the soul, the middle nature. And as God the maker of the world: so this essence, which is called by the title of a God, is everywhere in the whole world, it is, in the physical glass. And as the omnipotent God is immense in the procreation of its like, even to the last end of the greater world. For then the generative nature shall be taken away from every procreating thing. From which words one skillful in Nature may gather, that the stone can tinge many parts; whereby also many other difficulties may be removed. Then out upon Aristarchus who blushes not to profess himself an interpreter of the divine writings, and yet feareth not with his most impudent railing to attack this knowledge of a Nature created by God; than which, next after the sacred writings, God has conferred on this world nothing more magnificent and more sublime.

Tell me by the immortal God, what is more unjust than for men to hate what they are ignorant of? And then if the thing do deserve hatred, what is of all things more shallow? What more abject? Or what greater madness and potage is there, than to condemn that science in which you have concerned yourself just nothing at? Who hast never learned either Nature or the majesty of Nature, or the property or the occult operations of metals. The councellour also babbles and crokes, and the pettyfoggers of the law, the greatest haters of philosophy, who with the hammer of a venal tongue coin themselves money out of the tears of the miserable: who shipping over the most sacred of laws, have by the intricacies of their expositions persecuted all the world with their frauds. But why do I go after jeers and satyrs? Let these crabbed fellows and their followers remain perpetually in their opinion, who know nothing. Which is honest, which is pleasant, which is delightful, which lastly is anything elevated

above a vulgar doctrine: and who have attained at nothing glorious and famous, but perhaps at some plebian business from the black sons of Cadamus. But to which purpose are these? I have made the choice of this stone of the philosophers familiar to me; and I very often call it the only Minerva, and the greatest pearl of all occult philosophy, or of magic, not indeed of the superstitious, but of the natural. Yet it seems in the opinion of the unlearned to degenerate far from a better study: which is decreed and ordained by the divine will.

Chapter 8 and 9.
Treats of the first essence of all things: and it is here discussed what Nature is, what the soul the middle nature, what the soul of the world, where that very great error is confuted of philosophers asserting the world to be an animal, and it is disputed that there is only a human soul; by a participation or likeness of which, there seems to be a brutal soul. And that the sun is the eye of the world and the heart of heaven.

I have now a mind, candid reader, to procure you something concerning the secrets of Nature, both out of philosophical, and the theological magazine. Since I have perceived that many of the ancients as also of the more modern have taken great pains in searching after Nature, nobody but one beside himself will deny that those things will be of use to the whole academy and exercise of philosophy. But here the cradle of Nature is to be looked for a higher, do not therefore think it pious, if I make a digression a little further than perhaps this undertaking may require.
The most glorious God, the contriver, and the ineffable author of all things, before the beginning of the world, wanting nothing, but all-sufficient to himself, and forever remaining in the most profound retirement of his divinity, being out of his most abundant beauty willing, that the things from all eternity foreknown should proceed into existence, created in the beginning a certain essence of them, in rough draughts, as I may say, as yet unformed, which Moses, he whom I am to stile the fountain and chief president of the philosophy of the philosophers, does sometimes call a void and empty earth, sometimes an abyss and water, but Anaxagoras a confused chaos. Others have rightly termed it, the mother of the world, the foundation and the face of Nature. Within whose womb when all things lay undistinguished and undigested, nor more conspicuous in their proper forms, the artificial creator, did by the intervening spirit of God exactly and regularly drawn and describe this visible world, according to copy and the similitude of the intelligible world. Hence he with shining fires most workman-like adorned the heavens hung up on high, and so ordered and digested the motion of them, and of the stars, that they should in a wonderful manner run about the arch of heaven, for the formation of the varieties of the seasons succeeding one another; and that by their motion and light they might warm, cherish and preserve in their beings the inferior things. Therefore he laid the inferior things beneath the superior, as an egg to be hatched under a hen, or as a woman to be made fruitful by a man. Into which he from the beginning inserted certain seminal reasons, that they might, taking their opportunities, multiply themselves, as I may say, with a perpetual fertility and offspring. But God wrought out his compacted being of the world by certain harmony and musical proportion alleyed to one another, that which are in the superior world are in the inferior also, but in a terrestrial manner: that which likeness are in the inferiors, may also be seen in the superious, in a

celestial manner indeed, and according to the cause.
To which you may perhaps apply the opinion of Anaxagoras, holding that everything is in everything. Wherefore it is agreeable that God should rule and fill up all which he created. Nor do we therefore say that God does fill up all things, that they should contain him, but that they rather should be contained by him. Neither is it to be thought that God is in all things so that each thing according to the proportion of its bigness may contain him, that is the greater things the more, and the lesser the less. But God so filleth up all things that there is not anything where he is not. And we therefore understand within all things, but not included without all things, but not excluded: and therefore to be the interior, that by his uncircumscribed magnitude he may include all things. Therefore St. Dennis says: That all things may be affirmed of God, since he is the author and governor. On the contrary, that all things are more truly denied of him, since he is nothing of those things which he created. Which seems to me more acceptable and more certain, as well by the variable course of this world, as for the unsearchable abyss of his most exalted divinity. For God has placed the greatest distance between him and the created things. But God is truly immense and ineffable, not to be discovered, not to be understood, above all imagination, above all thought, above all understanding, above all essence, unnamable, to be by silence alone proclaimed in the heart: the most powerful, the most wise, the most clement: the father, the world, the holy spirit; and altitude incomprehensible, a trinity indivisible, an essence immutable. Whose image is all Nature, though the eye never be so intent. Who is the unity of all creatures, and main point, and the only one; who is stronger than all power, greater than all excellence, better than all praise. Whom the divine Plato made to inhabit in a fiery substance, meaning, that is, the ineffable Splendor of God in himself, and love around himself. Whom others have asserted to be an intellectual and fiery spirit; having no form but transforming itself into so ever it would and co-equalizing to all things universally. Who in a manifold way is as it were joined to his creatures. Again going forth from that his infinity eternity and omnipotence, he by a ferverent love, sincere faith and solid hope may be imbosomed in the purified minds of men. Let whom be blessed for all thousands of thousands of ages.
We said a little before that God was unnameable, whom Martinus Capella says that Arithmetica saluted by a proper name, when going to salute Jove, she with her fingers folded down into them, made up seven hundred, ten and seven numbers. But what that most noble number means, and its division into its members, the Arithmetician knows; not he who inquires into the mercantile way of numbering but into proportions. In this number we discover all numbers, and every proportion both musical and geometrical. Add something of greater moment. That in these numbers the name of God is most exactly found. Whose most holy and forever adorable name is in this fullness of time set down in five letters. When in the time of Nature it was written with three, and of the law with four. We say moreover that God has every name, because all things are in him, and he is in all things: as shall hereafter be disputed of, and yet has no name, because a fitting name cannot be given to the divine majesty. But how much mystery and strength number has in itself, I easily believe the Pythagoreans knew very well, who called one number Pallas, another Diana, another the father, another the mother, and finally one the male, and another the female: and those who had the greatest knowledge in the numeral science, applied the monas the united to God the creator: But the dias or duality to matter: to forms themselves the virgin trias or three: then to

man and to his life hexas and heptas the six and seven. But the eneas or ten they not a miss did very handsomely apply to all creatures.
But to return to the purpose, hear Dionysius repeating: That God is in all things, or all things are in God, as numbers are in unity, as in the center of the circle are all the right lines: and as the soul is the strength of the members. Because as the unity is the common measure, fountain and original of all numbers, and containing in itself every number entirely cojoined, is the beginning of all multitude. But guiltless of all multitudes is always the same and immutable; so in like manner are created things toward the creator. And as an individual soul, is the ruler of its body, and the whole present to the whole body, and to every part of it: so God is everywhere in this world and fills and governs, and perpetually preserves it by the virtue which he daily infuses liberally into created things out of the eternal fountain of his spirit. From whence we rightly by a certain similitude of the soul, do call the God of Nature or the power of God, by which he maintains all things, a soul, a middle nature, or the soul of the world. Not that the world itself is an animal, which we may explode from the entrance into christian philosophy, partly in the christian metaphysick, and partly in this consideration of the stone.
But sublimeness of the Nature hereof requires to be composed in a loftier style; we have here chosen a lower sort of speech; and we place the soul of the world chiefly in the sun. For there is nothing in the soul of the firmament, beside a soul, which represents a greater similitude of God than light itself. Since everything does challenge to itself so much of God, as I may say, as they are capable of light. And since nothing is more conspicuous bright-eyed than the sun, many of the platonicks chiefly imitating Orpheus herein have termed the sun, the eye of the world. Because all things were seen and shown themselves in it as in a certain most bright mirror. Hence Heraclitus says, that all things would perish, should you take the sun out of the world. What is this small body of ours, if the soul be away? No vein having a pulse is to be felt there, there is in it no show of sense, no vital breath nor any respiration therein.
Wherefore it also seemed good to some to call the sun the heart of heaven. Because as in the heart there is the only fountain of blood moistening and reddening the other members of the human body, and infusing a vital motion: So there seemeth to be in the sun the vegetation and preservation of all, as well inferior as well as superior things. Because he by this light inspires as it were, life and heat into inferior things. But light is a certain simple of single action converting all things unto itself by an enlivening warmth, passing through all beings, carrying their virtues and qualities through all and dispersing darkness and obscurity. Phoebus therefore resides in the middle with his refulgent locks, as king and emperor of the world, holding a scepter of the government: in whom that there is all the virtue of the celestials, nor only Iamblichus, but many others have confirmed. And also Proclus says: At the sun's aspect, that all the powers of all celestial things are gathered together and collected into one, which we believe are gathered together and collected into one, which we believe are at length through his fiery breathing have spread over this lower world. This also may be even a mighty argument to you: that the sun approaching toward us, the earth grows full of herbs and ripens, but when he departs it withers. But I now delight to make some comment on the infancy of Nature.

Chapter 9.
Of Nature.

We affirm Nature to be a certain power implanted in things producing like things out of like. For Nature generates, augments and nourishes all things. Wherefore it has in itself the names of all things. An animal is from Nature; a stone, wood, a tree, and the bodies which you see are from Nature and her maintaining. Nature is the blood of the elements, and the power of mixing which brings to pass the mixtures of the elements in everything in this sublunary world, and has imprinted on them a form agreeable to their species, by which that thing is distinguishable and separated from each other thing. Nor is Nature of any colour, yet a partaker and efficient of all colours: also of no weight, nor quality, but finally the fruitful parent of all qualities and things. What is therefore Nature? God is Nature, and Nature is God: understand it thus: out of God there arises something next to him.
Nature is therefore a certain invisible fire, by which Zoroaster taught that all things were begotten, to whom Heraclitus the Ephesian seems to give consent. Did not the spirit of the Lord, which is a fiery love, when it was carried on the waters, put into them a certain fiery vigor? Since nothing can be generated without heat. God inspired into created things, when it was said in the generation of the world; increase and be ye multiplied, a certain germination, that is, a greeness, by which all things might multiply themselves. Whence some more profoundly speculative, said that all things were green, is called to grow and increase, and that greeness they named Nature. But Aristotle says: That motion being unknown, Nature is unknown, since it is now volatile and in a continual motion of generation, augmentation and alteration, which at length in the latter end of the world, shall be stable and fixed. Because God will then take away from things that virtue and power of generating, and will place it in the most inward treasure of his omnipotence, where it was from eternity. I therefore had a mind to call this virtue of generation and of the preservation of things, the soul of the world. Not that the world is an animal, as the Platonick accounts and the testimonies of the Arabian, Egyptian, and Chaldean Astrologers seem to approve. For the Philosophers maintained the world to be an animal, and the heavens and the stars to be animals, and the souls of things to be intelligent, participating of the divine mind. Moreover that a God or certain soul presided over everything and that all things were full of Gods, was the opinion of Democritus and Orpheus and of many of the Pythagoreans: to whom they ordained divine honours. And to the same they dedicated prayers and sacrifices and revered them with diverse sorts of worship. Besides they reduced all such souls into one soul of the world. They likewise referred all their Gods unto one Jove. This Aristotle and the Aristotelian Theophrastus, this Avicenn, Algozeles [al-Ghazzal]; this the Stoics and all the Peripateticks do confess, and with their utmost power have endeavoured to prove. I do not doubt but that from hence sprung all the error of gentilism: from hence the fictions of the poets, the diabolical sacrifices and sacreligious victims. Hence the Egyptian land did in their chapels worship and adore some certain animals and other prodigious monsters. Who will not say therefore that the philosophy of the heathens is vain? Which was most miserably ruined by this common error, and by many others: where the philosophers seemed to me to be most like the beehives, or children busying themselves with bottomless vessels to drain a great well.
Yet we may think them worthy of forgiveness since there had not shined to them the true

light, Jesus Christ the saviour. Therefore it behooves the Christian Philosopher whose authority is graver, and judgement more certain to bring within the verge of the Catholick Church, which things so ever seem to make for the obligation of the nature of the faith as being possessed by unjust heirs: after the manner of Virgil who said he gathered Gold out of the dunghill of Ennius. Also like little bees, while they suck out the sweetest among the flowers of Hymettus and Hybla for the sake of making honey. Who is there who would not bewail with tears, the untimely death of Picus of Mirandolla, whom the fatal sisters have particularly envied to our Age. Who had he little longer enjoyed life; would have trimmed up with new beauty, the tattered and begging philosophy, blotting out all of its errors. Yet let everyone highly praise the lawful Philosophy, whose foundation is Nature, or the world, and which prescribes manners and virtue to man. Which does correct for you the first youthful years and rudiments of your life. Which challenges to itself the interpretation of Nature, and the search of things the most abstruse from our eyes. Most worthily true to which the scanning of divine and human things should be referred. We thereby as much as we can by the divine favour and by natural light inquiry into the recesses of the world, into the earth and the tracts of the seas, and the high heavens. This describeth heaven and the immeasurable multitude of stars, as also the journey of the golden haired sun, and the laborious eclipses of the moon. This, with a geometrical staff, describes the ways of the stars.

This teaches the Aeolian bellows and whispers of the winds,
which Hippotades does with his scepter rule.
Why the mass of the earth does stagger, what makes
The rainbow's arch, and hoary snows and frigid frosts.
What breeds the dew, the lightning, what the hollow
Fleeces of the clouds, the swellings of the Earth,
And the three forked thunderbolt.

What gathers showers, what the glazen hail; What are the seeds of gold, what of Iron; whence cruel thunder, whence the fountains of continual waters take their beginning, and such like other things. Let tender youths in their minority learn that philosophy; and everywhere avoid the doting fables of those philosophers who hold the world to be animal, and that it consists of innumerable animals, and those divine. What is more vain, what is more idle? For what else is it to say, the sun is animated, or the celestial bodies are animated, and participating of the divine mind, than to fall into an evil heresy, and the abominable falsehood of idolatry? Neither is it to be granted (witness St. Augustine) that those sidereal globes doe live by certain minds of their own, and those intellectual and blessed. I doe certainly know that only a human soul is divine light, created according to the image of the word, the cause of causes, and the first pattern; markest with the substance of the seal of God: and whose impression is the eternal word. By a participation of which we believe the brutal soul to subsist, taken out of the bosom of Nature, seeming to have a slender similitude and small footstep of a rational Soul, as the echo is the image and resemblance of a living voice. But let others look after the vegetable soul.
The theological doctors admit intelligences movers of the orbs; not that they inform the orbs themselves, or (according to the opinion of St. Jerome) make them intellectual and sensible,

but to assist them in moving. Though also those orbs might (the divine Will so commanding) be voluble of their own accord. Yet the omnipotent God out of his ineffable bounty, would have second causes to preside over this worldly fabric, that whosoever does move themselves, does also give to others the power of moving. Whence also he also deputed angels for the custody of human souls, though he also primarily guarded himself. Yet it is not to be thought that such like Intelligences are necessarily applied to turn the spheres, as if they could not be turned about by their own rotation; when some busy men do in like manner frame that heavenly machine of copper or brass, fixing the earth in the very middle. Then they afterwards with certain little wheels affix the other elements, also the orbs of the stars and heavens, whereby they endeavor exactly to express the motion of the planets and the face of heaven. There are other curious men who endeavor to frame clocks and also certain mills which should turn perpetually. If man can imitate the divine method, who would not believe that those sidereal globes by their own power may be wheeled about?

But what shall I say of the vain astrology, which our Picus of Mirandolla, famed in all sorts of learning, has sometime since by forcible reasons overthrown? Tell me, why astrologer, why refer you all things to heaven? Why do you romance about the natures of the stars and the signs, and of the motions of the planets? Who can by no means guess at the force and property of even the least terrestrial thing? Why should you fear the constellations and the stars, or rather lie? Who cannot by dimensions comprehend any little earthen body. What is more ridiculous, what more absurd, that have not in the ninth or tenth heaven to catch at such figurations and images of lines, or at the figures of the eighth heaven from the wandering application of the stars? What power do you think such imagined images have? What do the triplicities, what do the aspects of those stars and the rest of such like books void of the truth and virtue pretend to? Although such motions and the natures of the stars, and various applications of things to one another should seem to have some signification, yet I am persuaded man cannot well know them unless it were shown to them by some miracle from heaven. Hence St. Jerome thus derides astrologers and nativity calculators. These are they who lift up themselves against God's knowledge and all which is acted in the world, promising themselves a fictitious science, they refer to rising and setting of stars. These are they who are vulgarly called mathematicians, and think human affairs to be governed by the course and ways of the stars: and when they promise safety to others, know not their own punishments. I, while I was yet in the city Agrippa played thus upon the Astrologer. In my opinion it commonly happens to those Astrologers, as it did to Thales Milesius heretofore, who when he went out of his house to gaze at the stars, is said to have fallen into a ditch underneath him. Who when he ridiculed an old woman, being laughed at by her, he returned home with shame. Wherefore, O Christian philosopher, send away into perpetual banishment beyond the Caspian mountains, such like foolish chattering of Astrology, and its daughters Geomancy, Hydromancy, Pyromancy, Necromancy, Soothsaying, and many other such dotages with what other vulgarly resembles them and do not attribute to his creatures the glory of the omnipotent Lord God. Now let us see what Nature the philosophers inquired after.

Chapter 10.
What the Philosophers, and what sort of Nature they would have: where the spirit is said to be the ethereal chariot of the soul.

The stone which the philosophers do seek is an invisible and impalpable spirit; it is a tincture and a tinging spirit: which indeed another visible and palpable spirit has hidden in its innermost bowels. Even so the Philosophers have left us the same spirit undiscovered, under the veil of Ã†nigmas that the stone is a fifth separated from four. It is the bond of the elements, the medium and the chain, which has made the elements of God agree, and which in the womb of the earth conglutinated Sulphur and Mercury into a metallic body. And because such a bond, as is in the earth, since it is invisible cannot be had, the philosophers sought after it in the more perfect body. The Philosophers do therefore inquire after the generative Nature, which may be able to generate metals, that they cleanse it, and make it a hundred thousand times more potent in tincture than it was at first in Nature. And they accustomed themselves to call it a living fire, or the living fire of Nature, or by a secret word, The Soul of the Middle Nature. And as physicians distinguish man into body, spirit, and soul, in like manner the philosophers have divided the stone into those parts. Sometimes the spirit is the life of the soul, the soul is the life of the spirit. Again those two are the life of the body. The spirit is also the tie of the soul and the body, and as it were the ethereal chariot or vehicle of the soul, which spreads abroad the virtue of the soul through the whole body. You may also understand the four elements, when the philosophers affirm that the stone consists of body, spirit, and soul. For the water is spirit; also Air: the middle Fire, as I may say, is spirit. The earth we call not spirit but body, because it is the retainer, the matter and the seat of the other elements.

Chapter 11.
Teaches that solution is necessary, by which the generative spirit is brought out of the body.

But such a tie cannot be easily had, by reason of the most strong compactedness of gold itself, except by solution, which is the foundation and beginning of this noble science, in which the arcanum of all Nature does consist. It is the treasure of this affair. 'Tis is which lifts up the poor man from the dunghill and equals him to kings and princes. Whence the philosophers demand why the bodies, that is, gold and gilver are dissolved. They answer: That the pure may be separated from the impure. For the body is for this reason dissolved, that the earth itself may be cleansed in the profundity. Which Nature could not, because she operates simply [or singly]. And in that cleansing the impediments of the tincture is away, so that it may innumerably propagate its like. But if so be that this propagation of its like be made by the spirit, since every spirit is the author of generation, and it is hindered by grosser matter, we say that solution is necessary, by which gold may be made living, and as I may say, spiritual, and be reduced into the first Nature, that is into the spirit of the water, and the vapour of the earth, that there may at length be had such a sulphur and a mercury with us, out of which metals are generated, in the womb of the earth. But solution is perfected when you shall have separated the soul and the spirit of gold. But because with philosophers gold is the most temperate body, having equal parts of hot, cold, moist and dry. Therefore it may with

the more difficulty be corrupted and dissolved by reason of the equal agreement and proportion of the elements. Therefore there must a disagreement be made among the elements by contrary elements: and this discord makes a solution and mortification of the body: which being done there is made a cleansing mundification of Nature, which nevertheless cannot be done without a physical separation of the elements. But the elements of the body must be so separated, that the generative nature may remain in its flower and bud. That if anyone should burn that flower, and separate the elements from one another, the generative sperm would be lost; nor would any creature be able to join them anymore, so as they should generate. This is the truest consideration of the philosophers. If any out of his own fancy consider otherwise, he is indeed a natural fool, and makes syllogisms against Nature.

Chapter 12.
Disputes of hidden things in the art, and about threefold separation.

But ye sons of wisdom, there are three solutions in the physical work. The first is of the crude body: the second is of the physical earth: the third we place in the Augmentation. There are also in the solution these three hidden things: the weight, the measure of time and fire. Wherefore if you know the weight of mercury and gold, and the measure of time, how long solution is in the making, and in a temperate fire, you have solution: which ought to be made in the secret Furnace, and a little larger glasses. Wherefore diverse fires are to be procured, and so different parts to be put in glasses; that you may at last endowed with divine favour, find it out. You must also distinguish in this admirable work the days, months and years of the philosophers. The philosophers affirm, that if you, you may make the trial in three natural days. That if you are of a sprightlier wit, say they, you may distinguish it in twenty four hours. They in philosophy have appointed two nights and three days. Beseech the greatest and highest God that you may be worthy to the last red day. The philosophers also lay down three keys, solution, conjunction, and fixation. Or if you profoundly understand them, three separations. First there is made the separation of the soul from the body by the spirit. Secondly the grimes themselves, which have shown themselves in the solution, are separated from the soul and spirit. Lastly the spirit shall be separated from the soul and this happens in the fixation of Nature: so that hereafter and here I shall have told you so great secrets, that it cannot be believed. I do faithfully affirm two keys in the whole circle of philosophy. The first indeed which opens the body may be distributed into several keys. For what thing soever shall dissolve gold and reduce it into a spirit is called a key, though only one among others be the most powerful and natural key, as I wrote in chapter 8. And such a thing is called the stone. The second key which shuts up and does retain and coagulate the tinging spirit, we term the earth alone, which all philosophers have called the principle Stone. But of the crow's head we freely profess, that all the philosophers from the beginning of the world have had so little, that it can hardly be believed. Yet the miserable Philosophasters have thought that blackness which appeared in the superficies, out of the superfluity of the mercury and the body to be the crow's head.

Chapter 13.
Treats of the praxis of the stone, of its first solution, and separation: where the arcanum

of Nature, otherwise most abstruse, is laid open to a son of wisdom, in which Lucifer falls out of heaven.

'Tis now time, O son of wisdom, to turn my pen to the practical part, where I would first warn everyone given to philosophy, that all kinds of salts, allums, and of many other and of foreign things are in vain, and bring with them nothing moment or efficacy. Likewise that all common solutions and vulgar sublimations are adulterate works and belong nothing to the true and natural science of the philosophers. Wherefore I judge those mountebanks are to be avoided who with their dealbations and rubifications have cheated almost all the world, in whom there is no vein of philosophy, which is warm, and who are rather to be esteemed false philosophers, since nothing is dearer to philosophers than the truth: nothing more foul than falsehood and deceit. Whereby it comes to pass that there are fewer philosophers, than you have perhaps believed. Now let us descend to the praxis, which we will divide into two works. In the first mention shall be made of the first solution, and of separation and distillation. In the second we will treat of conjunction and fixation, where consideration will be had of the most secret augmentation, which you will find in no book in the world. But here I have a mind to bring in the degrees of all the work wholly. For first we compound, the compound we putrefy, the putrefied we dissolve, the dissolved we divide, the divided we cleanse, the cleansed we unite, and so the work is accomplished. But to speak of these, each particularly, shall be our labour. But the philosophers are of opinion that in the praxis of the stone less than a twelfth part of mercury aught to be taken. But there is also among them a trial of the dissolved body, if it be squeezed through a leather.

Some also of the more modern have thought, that solution may be made in a shorter time if a long pounding or grinding of the gold by itself were first made by a certain mill or in a mortar. First therefore let the copper be purified with common salt prepared or with any other fitting thing, that its most subtle substance may be had. Let some parts of this purified water be mixed very well with one part of the most fine Gold, reduce into leaves or thin spangles, and let them be put in a long glass with a hollow belly, stopped with little pieces of cloth, and with the sign of the cross, and let the glass be covered with ashes, up to the superficies of the water, and let a very small heat be given, that the matter may not seem to ascend, but remain live with the gold, and let that equally balance heat be kept so long a while, until in the water of mercury there out upon it a certain vaporous and subtle earth, which in a wonderful colour is wont to be known when it is to be extracted. But the sulfur itself shines like a rainbow through the waters, yet not with all colors, like the rainbow in this greater world. The arch is itself of the rainbow stands half in the pure liquid and fluent water, and half upon the earth. Hence the whole property of and its natural similitude is shown by the iris, the rainbow: nor is the rainbow seen in heaven, but when the sun shines, which also uses to be followed by rain. But mists or thick clouds coming on, the sun itself, and also the arch of the rainbow is hidden. It pleased the natural philosophers to thus explain the rainbow: when the sun colours a moist and hollow cloud, and is thick like a looking-glass, and intersects the middle of its orb: which comes nearer to our divine and admirable science. Yet it is not to be thought that the Sulphur itself grows black when you extract it, as some have thought. The copper being at length extracted, you shall distill the water, in which there is the soul of gold or the metallic mercury of gold, with a slow heat, so that three core minutes may be counted between drop

and drop. And that distilled water is called, our living water, which enlivens all bodies, and is composed of two natures: understand spirit, soul, and ferment, because the spirit is the seat of the soul, and its retaining bond. And this water is called by many names, the most sharp vinegar, lune, the woman's sperm, or the feminine menstruum, heaven, mercury, the hair of the red man, that is, the spirit of Sol, that is of gold: But the Sulfur is called the body, the male Sol, the male sperm, earth and mercury. But these distillations are necessary, by which mercury is purified from all terrestrial feculence, and Lucifer, that is, the uncleanness and the accursed earth falls down out of the golden heaven, and here a separation is made of the grime from the soul, as I disputed in chapter 12. Here a lofty similitude: heaven, that is, gold was pure in the original but when it was dissolved it showed corruption. Therefore the fist evil was in heaven, while as yet there was corruption and Lucifer, after whose fall heaven was so cleansed that no angel can now fall down out of the golden heaven. But if so be that Lucifer had had within himself, a soul of a middle nature, or a God, he could by no means have been thrust down to the infernals.

Chapter 14.
Disputes about the second part of the praxis, where there is a more secret dispute about the fire and the colours: and these questions are resolved: Whether heaven ought to descend to the earth: Or the earth ascend into heaven: Or whether both ought to remain beneath heaven?
Where the spirit is compared to an angel, who seems to descend with a human soul into a body.

There now remains the second part of the physical praxis, the far harder indeed, and far more sublime. In which we read that all the nerves of wit, and at length all the races of the mind of many philosophers have languished. For you would with more difficulty make a man revive, than put him to death. Here the work of God is required. It is indeed the greatest mystery to create souls, and frame an inanimate body into a living statue. Do you not think it is the business of a sprightly Wit to reduce the soul to the spirit, then the spirit to the soul, then again those two to the body? In this body of ours, it is requisite to know, how much the spirit is, how much the soul, and how much the body. Furthermore how much of the soul the middle nature, is in the spirit, and how much in the body, that by this you may join as it were two natures of the same kind, and akin to one another in due proportion. We ought therefore to join two waters, the Sulphur of Gold, and the soul and body of its Mercury, Sol and Lune, the male and female, two sperms, heaven and earth, and two, as I may say, Argent vives, and out of which alone the philosophers say their stone is made; which pitiful fellows mistake for crude mercury. But that mercury is all metals, male and female, and an hermaphrodite monster in the very marriage of the soul and the body, which I call solution; and the putrefaction of the philosophers. The earth of gold is dissolved by its own spirit, which you shall discover in these proportions. The body must be dissolved in the subtlest middle air: The body is also dissolved by its own heat and humidity; where the soul, the middle nature holds the principality in the colour of blackness all in the glass: which blackness of Nature the ancient Philosophers called the crows head, or the black sun.
From whence a certain person advanced this proposition. I saw three circles encompassing

one another, three suns in the firmament having three faces, that is, a black, a white, and a red sun. That blackness was also called by the name of all black things; after which all the colours of the world, which can be conceived by wit, use to appear, which at length are brought to a true whiteness, as to a center and principle point. In white there are all colours, and from that the rest seem, as I may say, to be coloured. White and black by Nature herself are colours, and indeed the extremes, out of the manifold mixture and proportion of which with one another we believe the middle colours, as they are called, to arise. We hold also that from the confounding black and white together there is prepared a certain redness. But that whiteness we call the white stone, the white sun, the full moon, and calcined Lune, white silver, the white earth, fruitful, cleansed and calcined, the white Calx, and the Salt of the metals, and the calcined body, and we call it by many other names. It is moreover called the living earth, and the living and white Sulphur, when the soul has been reduced into the body, and the Impediment removed. Here we resolve this question: Whether the earth ought to be airy or fiery? We say both at once. If so be it were only fiery, it would be burned into the ashes of the dead. But if only airy, being made volatile it would vanish away in tinging metals.

But what shall I say of the fire whereby the dissolution of the Earth is made? Behold the heat in the bowels of the earth, which Nature alone supplies: where you seem as it were to perceive none; which being then excited by the sun's heat, does in the metal-breeding mountains by ascending and descending for many cubits coagulate everywhere the thicker water, and together with the fatness of the earth associates them into one body. But since Nature does scarcely sometimes in five hundred years effect her operation, and so long an enjoyment of life is not granted us, nor we permitted to live beyond the elephant, or to the year of Plato, as they call it; the philosopher allows a greater degree to the fire, that he may in a shorter time emulate Nature as his guide. Wherefore you with good reason will say that he excels in a particular happiness of disposition, who can show you the fire agreeable to, or of, Nature.

The philosophers call their natural fire a bath, or their sun, or horse dung; which some make with wood, or any other matter; but we with coals, especially in a furnace fitted for this purpose. The stone is also to be made in a threefold earthen vessel, that there may a slower fire be had, very much like, I say, to the heat of a hen, while she sits on her eggs. And with that heat the dragon, that is the earth of Gold, mortifies himself, when he gives elements and spirits out of himself. On the contrary he revives himself, when he hath received the spirits again unto himself. Wherefore he is compared to Jesus Christ, who voluntarily offered himself to death for us, and afterward by his own power, by the glory of his resurrection, restored himself to life never anymore to die. We also say in this place that the dragon spews out of himself all obscurity and venom, and that he afterward imbibes it and is whitened. And because we have said above that heaven ought to be joined with earth, there arises this question: whether heaven ought to descend to the earth, or the earth ought to ascend up to heaven? It is most certain that the earth cannot ascend, unless heaven first descends, but the earth is said to be sublimed up to heaven, when being dissolved in its own spirit, it is at length made one thing with it. I will satisfy you with this similitude: the son of God descending into the virgin, and there flesh, a formed man is born, who when he had for our salvation shown us the way of truth, having suffered and died for us, after the resurrection

returneth into the heavens. Where earth, that is, humanity, was exalted above all the circles of the world, and placed in the intellectual heaven of the most holy trinity. In the like manner when I die, my soul assisted by the grace and merits of Christ returns unto the vital Fountain, from whence it hath descended. The body returns unto the earth, which being at length purified in the last judgement of the world, the soul coming down from heaven, leads away with itself to glory. But because it is requisite that the soul should ascend to heaven, another doubt offers itself: that is whether the spirit ought to pass with the soul to heaven, or whether both ought to remain beneath heaven? We have said that the spirit is in this world the bond of which it retains the soul; but when the stone shall have arrived at the first whiteness, there will be another world far more excellent than the former, where the spirit shall remain in the middle, the soul in heaven, and the body in the bottom. Understand the earth to be the heaven of the soul, contrarywise the soul to be the heaven of the body. And because the spirit has enfeebled the body in solution, they both do penance, and the soul is purged by the spirit, and likewise is the body. Only the soul cleansed from feces ascendeth up into the heaven, and the spirit goes away with its grimes. If so be that that spirit should stay with the soul and the body, there would be a perpetual corruption there, nor would there be made a right agreement and equality of the elements. This spirit you may fitly liken in some things to an Angel who uses to descend with a human soul (when it is infused into the middle point of the heart, and from thence into all parts of the little body.)
We make also the body, soul and spirit speak by the way of dialog, the spirit saying to the soul: I will lead thee to eternal death, to hell and to the darksome house. To whom the soul: Thou spirit o my life; why do you not bring me back again into the bosom from whence by flattery you took me out? I thought myself bound to you by kindred: I truly am your friend, and will bring you to eternal glory: But the body thinks that by reviving it, he makes it glorious. To whom the spirit: I will truly do it, but miserable I, I am forced to be gone when I shall have placed you above all precious stones, and made you blessed. Wherefore I beseech you when you shall have arrived at the throne of the kingdom, to be sometimes mindful of me. To whom the body at length gave innumerable thanks, that he had given it a most excellent being, by which he beheld God as in a looking-glass, and promised to remember him; and congratulates on the chiefest parts or share in the throne of the kingdom.

Chapter 15.

Explains this proposition: In the shade of the sun is the heat of the moon; and in the heat of the moon is the cold of the sun. Likewise how it is known in the moon, the sun ought to shine. What the shade of the sun and the moon is, and that it is necessary that the sun and the moon and likewise heaven and earth be joined, and makes mention of the citrine Aurora.

We said in the foregoing chapter, that Sol and Lune ought to be joined. We believe you know what Sol is, lastly what Phoebe herself. Cynthia, that is, Luna opens Phoebus, Sol. Phoebus shuts and coagulates his sister, that is Luna. In the very marriage of Sol and Lune understand this proportion. In the shade of Sol, is the heat of the moon. And in the heat of the moon is the cold of Sol. For when the humidity of Luna has received heat and light from Sol, Sol is said to enter into Luna, at whose entrance Luna revives, increases and begins to grow warm,

but Sol to grow cold and moist; because he hath received water to himself and hath lost heat and dryness, whereby losing his share of light, he becomes dark. But when Luna shall go into Sol, Sol himself begins to revive, and Luna bereft of brightness grows thin and is obscured. From whence I assert that the shade of Sol is the coldness and moisture of Luna, but that the shade is the day of Luna. Take the shade therefore from Sol, and his whole light is everywhere dispersed. Yet think not that Luna can take light from the sun in one little space of an hour, but the body is dissolved by little and little. In the beginning when Phoebe is joined to Sol, she is set on fire by him, who being enkindled is seen to shine by degrees before midnight; but when she has filled up her whole orb, she uses to enlighten all the night. Who decreasing again and growing dim for want of light, the heat of Phoebus begins to be vigorous. Where you will plainly know in Luna when Sol ought to shine, if carrying with you the meaning of my writings, you run it over inwardly in your mind; though it may also be understood by other industry. When Luna, that is, the white stone shall begin to grow citrine and red, it is a token of Sol shining. The beginning of redness is Aurora. Who would not call Aurora citrine? Tithonia, that is, Aurora seems to be bound to this common office to redden the air, and with the first light to show the rapid journey of Phaeton, that is, of Sol. Where at length yellow Eous pours out the quick sighted light from the eastern climate, which seems to be the soul. But that, as it is argued above, it is necessary that Sol go into Luna, then Luna into Sol, we discover two intermediate impediments in heaven, Venus and Mercury, which being taken away there will be a wonderful copulation of them, which being done, Luna will no more lose her light, but shine with lustre of her own. And Sol, in a like manner: and the last day of the former world will come, after which there follows another world, and another life, where there will be either a perpetual day with those above, or a perpetual shade with those below: And fire will descend from heaven and shall again ascend up to the golden heaven, that is, shall tinge the imperfect.

Chapter 16.
Of the augmentation it self of the stone, both of the ancients and the modern Philosophers: and it is concluded that there is but one day and one night. Again seven days from the seven lords of the world.

It now pleases me, O son of wisdom, to bring that physical pinnacle into the happy work. Then move the oars, spread the sails abroad, give a swift and prosperous wind, the safe haven is to be looked for. After our stone is made white, we call it our begotten son: though now a child it is a perfect man, consisting of a body and soul; yet it is not able to get another progeny, unless it be first bred up with a nourishment of its own nature, until it arrives at an age mature for generation. We have received from these ancient philosophers, who operated in Nature only, that their living water was divided into two parts. Who when they had with one part of the water attained to the fixed whiteness, they rubefied it with the other part of the water which was reserved, or perhaps with fire alone. Others in the red stone, because it hath ascended to the highest degree, and cannot be increased by itself, have begun again those works, which they accomplished before, dissolving that redness with the other part of the water, which they had reserved, they again reduced it into the first essence, as I may say. And they worked almost in all things as from the beginning, but truly with a greater industry both

of the fire and of the labours: and I believe this repetition to be the truer and the greater augmentation.
Wherefore also the first philosophers used a longer time in finishing the stone. Which their successors and posterity used to end in the course of a year, so that they augmented the white stone (by which they would tinge into silver) with a lunar sperm throughout the whole, or by adding to it other spirits, namely white ones drawn out of tin, and lead by sublimation. Moreover they rubified the white stone with the solar sperm, or other reddish spirits out of iron and copper. And this you may judge was done not amiss, since those inferior bodies have much tincture in them. If so be you should take what is the more perfect out of those bodies and should add it to the more perfect body, what doubt is there that the whole would be made perfect? And such like inferior bodies are called spirits when we say: Dissolve the body, that is the stone already made, and join the spirits. They are also called children when we say: children play with the stone, when they make it greater in weight and virtue. Whence also we in other works know the urine of children of four years old to be the water of the four inferior bodies; which since it is called the aqua fortis of the Philosophers, is said to dissolve gold: out of which things we do not deny but that a certain stone is made.
The mineral stone we distinguish in three ways. The stone of the Philosophers is made out of gold alone and Nature alone; and that is the more sublime; which is by the philosophers reported to cure all sicknesses. The second is the simple stone, when the root only, and the sulfur of gold or silver is in the end augmented by the spirits of the inferior bodies. Where these weights set down in the lesser Turba are discussed: One to three, or two to seven, wanting only a golden or a silver sulphur.
The three red spirits are reduced to the golden, the three white ones to the Silver sulphur. Now there are two sulphurs and seven spirits out of which the number nine proceeds and is made up: Concerning which most men have even unto this day, made foolish comments. We say that the sulphurs of all the metals with their spirits make up the third stone. It is by the most prudent in philosophy thus determined that the stone can tinge innumerable parts. That every spirit is multipliable, but no body. And since our stone is made extremely volatile, and as I may say, spiritual and all fiery, and nourished in the fire by a long decoction, and very often repeated by very many solutions and coagulations, why may you not believe that that stone can tinge innumerable parts? If you with judgement do inwardly apprehend the way of Nature and her admirable properties. The more often you shall have dissolved it into the white Sol, and again coagulated, the more it will tinge. Also the more wives a man shall have taken, the greater issue he will have.
And a certain philosopher says this: If you shall have given it tincture, it will tinge as you would have it. Which may also be seen in corn and seed, since out of one little grain many are produced, out of which often repeated, there uses to arise at length a rich crop. Nor will this be a lesser argument, if to the sun and moon first conjoined you add their children; that is, the inferior planets, and the planets are the lords of the world, who govern all this mighty mass. What should hinder it, but that the stone composed of all ye metallic things may by tinging the whole world. The same is also manifest concerning the stone out of Gold only, because Sol is the Lord of the other planets, and the rest of the planets take from him a golden lustre. From whence it may be concluded that there is but one day and one night in the whole age of the world. Again seven days from the seven planets, and those days one day; because

the sun is one: the brightness of the sun, is day, which shining on you, all trouble and calamity does fly away from you.

Chapter 17.
Explains certain obscure proportions laid down in the books of this science.

The Samian Pythagoras when he received scholars into his college to be instructed, is said in the first place to have given them this command; not to publish to the vulgar any of those things which were treated of in their schools. Wherefore he made his hearers be silent for the space of five years, that it might not be lawful for them either to ask their master, or discourse of those things among themselves. Which custom the Pythagoreans following, at length their memory failing, they begun to put into writing those things which they had learned of their master, as well concerning the principles of things, as concerning divine things: so that the secret marrow of those things should be hid in the sacred obligations of numbers. Which that Plato also did (who by doubtful similitudes and mathematical figures hid his precepts is shown by his epistle which he writ to Dionysus concerning the nature of the first being. We must write, says he, by ambiguities and Ã†nigmas, that if the book happen to be cast away by sea or by land, he who should read might not understand it. This I also judge gave occasion to the poets to make their fables, whereby, least things sublime should pass away to the unworthy mob, they laid up the sweetest food of philosophy under the essential bark of little fables. We read that the Egyptians to preserve their determinations, in their holy places, hid them in letters difficult to be known, that is in certain figures of animals, as being the print or sign of Nature. If I well remember there was the effigy of a vulture. A dragon drawn into a circle, and biting his own tail, made out the image of the running year. Do not some more curious people endeavor to ascribe everything to it's proper character, whereby there might be a more hidden remark of that thing. Thereby it comes to pass that those ancient philosophers were of opinion to deliver this divine art under more obscure words. The cause you'll find in chapter 7.
Wherefore I thought it requisite and worth the while, if I should explain to you, as to a son of philosophy, some obscure propositions, by which you may easily canvas others which occur. The philosophers say that their stone is found everywhere, in the mountains and in caves. From that proposition evilly understood, I am persuaded that all the errors were derived down to posterity, who works in blood, eggs, hair, and other vain and foreign things. Do you understand it thus. As the celestial sun itself, by its rays is everywhere in this greater world: so this terrestrial Sol, that is gold, is everywhere in the whole glass, that is, in the lesser world: in the mountains, that is, in the head of the glass and in heaven: and in the caverns, that is the bottom of the glass and in the earth. They say the stone is bred in two mountains: in heaven the mountain and in the earth, another mountain, understand it in the glass. Furthermore they affirm their stone to be in all things: that is, in all metals, which are their things. The stone also is in everything, that is, Nature is in everything. And because Nature has in itself all names, and Nature is all the world, therefore the stone has many names and is said to be in everything: although one is nearer than another: since the philosophers demand the generative nature alone of metals. Whence they say that the rich; that is, the perfect bodies, that is the gold and silver have that nature, as well as the poor, that is, the imperfect

metals. Yet the nature of gold or of silver is the more perfect, and the more permanent in the fire, than the rest of the metals. The Philosophers also seek a fixed and a permanent thing, which may govern all the world, namely, Sol and Lune. From whence they anciently call the Sun the lord of the world: in whom there is life to heal all things, who by his motion makes day and night, and illuminates the whole world with his brightness. Wherefore Sol says, I am the stone; or in me is the stone. The philosophers also say: That the work of the stone is the work of a woman, and the play of children. The woman is sometimes the earth, sometimes the Mercury, which seems to perfect the whole work. The children play with the stone, that is, the three elements with the earth, or the inferior bodies play with the golden stone, when they augment it in the end. Likewise, children play with the stone and cast it away, that is, ignorant and unskillful folks cast away the earth itself in the bottom, when they have made sublimation. Some Philosophers have compared the work of the stone to the creation of the world. Likewise to the generation of man, and to his naturalness.

But the more modern philosophers have hidden this knowledge not only in new words, but also in painted images. I have seen painted by a most goodly pencil, A naked virgin, of a tender age, with hair like ivory, black eyes, white and red cheeks, whose breasts were milky, very smooth and round. And that virgin was in all the beauty of he body so excellent and so handsomely adorned with all the endowments of Nature, that she might be thought most worthy of a royal bed, and with whom also all Philosophers, both the ancient and the modern might be deeply in love. Such as the poets use to describe Venus, or Juno, or any other beautiful maid or damsel. But that nymph had in her hands hung down, two mighty burning torches, and under her right foot there was a golden stone out of whose bosom a certain golden fountain ran forth into many little veins. Under her left foot there was a silver stone, vomiting out of itself a silver flame. On the right hand Titan himself was painted, with his rays sparkling all round about. On the left were described the Horns of Phoebe: there flew about certain birds partly upward into the air, partly downward to the earth. At the Virgin's back you see there has grown up a tree replenished with diverse apples and flowers, which you would take to be the Tree of Life planted in the Garden of Paradise, if you did taste its flavor and liveliness. Hermes is described in his philosophical mitre, evidently the chief of all the philosophers, sitting in a chair, holding two tables on his knees; in one whereof there were delineated both the globe of the Sun and the horned Moon; under whom there were two birds drawn into a circle mutually swallowing one another; whereof one, the uppermost was painted with wings, the other without. In the other table there were painted three changeable-coloured circles, in the middle of which was the image of the Moon, to whom two suns, one of them darted out one ray, the other two: and nine eagles flew about Hermes' Chair, having in their feet, bended bows, from which feathered arrows were shot down unto the Earth. Has not one Ulmannus a Friar Minorite of the order of St. Francis with a most admirable dexterity woven out our science in his own country's language and mother tongue? And by Christ's passion proved it most true? Where there is seen that double shaped Image, partly male, partly female, that hermaphroditical monster, carrying in its hand a scepter of imperial majesty: and many other things of that kind are seen in the books of the philosophers.

Chapter 18.
Shows that the stone can cure all sicknesses: since all Nature is in the sun, and the sun in Nature, and especially in the stone.

But that the stone can cure all sickness, of these all the books of the philosophers are full. Yet I will according to my best ability study to demonstrate it. All Nature is in the Sun, and the Sun in Nature. Therefore we may catch his spirit in all things, but especially in gold. And when Nature is sick, that stone cures Nature. In propagating gold Heaven has taken the greatest pains; likewise the Sun itself, and Jupiter. The Sun has put all his endowments into it, by reason of its fiery virtue and brightness. But Jupiter whom the physicians call the patron of life, has infused into it temperance and an equality of the elements. By these gifts Gold is made so incorruptible, that no fire can by destroying act upon its substance and virtue. To these are added the solution of Gold, the purification of its Nature, and a long nourishment in fire, by which it has obtained a wonderful and almost divine operation. If so be you should take in victuals or in drink the weight of a grain of mustard seed, it by its celestial vigor would preserve in an equality the oil and fire of life, and would temper and tie together the elements of your body in peace. Which being tempered, the soul would abide with the elements and man would remain always sound, until that end which the omnipotent God has ordained by reason of the disobedience of our first parent. There was in Christ's body so great an affinity, and so great a binding together of the elements, because he was liable to sin, as also by reason of the wonderful union of the divine essence, that he had never died naturally, had he not for the sake of redeeming, man willingly desired death. Render him perpetual thanks for creating you, for redeeming you from the infernal regions with his precious blood, and for bestowing on you so great a gift as this. Whereby you may lead a long life and have health in happiness, for which chiefly our stone is to be sought after. I say nothing of the plenty of riches, with which a man by this art most fully and copiously abounds. If having the Aurum potable or the golden liquor, you shall dissolve that stone in aqua vitae drawn out of malmsey wine, or some other falernum, that is, rich wine.

Chapter 19.
Repeats the Philosophical praxis, where the divine skill of the stone is often times all of it set down in short sentences.

Mix the masculine prince with Mercury in a twelfth proportion in respect of the prince. Put it to a slow fire and continue it, until the mercury dissolving the bodies there appear aloft. A Venus swimming, which extracts until nothing of the body remains in the bottom, and you have the first part of the physical work. The second part of the work is sulphur, put that in a glass without water, and by distilling the water of the body, in which there is the soul of Lune. Join this water with the sulphur, and permit a many times, one to arise sometimes with the other, sometimes to be depressed: until Venus shall have conceived her water, which is done in a most white color, and you have the elixir to the white. The third part of the work is: You shall make citrine with a strong fire, the most white, earth which you have obtained: afterward you shall rubify it by the force of fire, and it is the elixir to the red.
Of another way of working: Still I have a mind to contain in short, and with admirable art that divine knowledge. Dissolve the body, take the Sulphur, cleanse it, sublime the spirit, join the

spirit with the sulphur, and you will have the physical art. In every perfect alchemical work, though never so small, it is necessary to have the spirit and sulphur of Gold. The spirit tinges with a golden colour. The sulphur gives the weight of Gold, and coagulates. If it wanted either, the work would be nothing. Then say and speak the greatest truth, that all the secret of Nature lies hid in the Venus of the physical Gold. Wherefore it is wont to be called the coagulation; when it is said: take that coagulum from the body, and you have a magistery, than which there is not a greater in Nature. Likewise cleanse the coagulum, and destroy the impediment, and you will tinge. But because a dirty cloth, not compared to sulphur, cannot be washed without water. To wash is to dissolve, to dissolve is to purify, the water is mercury, it is the key. It alone does open the body, and whitens the sulphur, which being whitened, it recedes with uncleanliness. I would say you were admirably learned if you should be able to remove it, the uncleanliness, it is the impediment and eternal death. Wherefore it shall not go to heaven, as above in chapter 14 I have plainly demonstrated. And I say unto you by God the creator of heaven, it is one of the greatest secrets. Furthermore, the very knowledge of the stone is no other thing than the purification of the earth, or of Nature. The earth cannot be cleared from feces and purged, unless through the middle or center it shall have received the water unto itself. And this comprehends the whole art in short, if you have understood Nature. You may of yourself by divine grace discover many things like unto these. Praise God for all ages of ages.
The end of my Consideration.

Quere if hereby he affirms himself
to be an Adept. But there may
be many reasons unknown to us:
I question not but the Inquisition was
the reason of his suppressing his name.

Chapter 20.

Lays down the Questions put by Illardus the Necromancer to the devil, concerning the stone of the Philosophers.

A certain Necromancer, Illardus by name in the province of Catilania put these questions to the devil.

Whether the stone of the Philosophers can be made, to convert the imperfect metals into Gold and Silver, fire being the judge?
All metals are essentially in Gold, with their earths in a manifold color. Out of its earth with its own essence the stone is made, which by its Nature takes all uncleanliness away, and being projected on the imperfect metals, fixes them forever.

What and what kind of a essence is that?
It is a soul, a middle nature, which permits one form to be converted into another.

In what manner does the soul, the middle nature, act?
Neither angels, nor men in any wise inwardly behold or comprehend it by their acutest understandings. Because this is proper to God who reserved this to his own majesty.

Can man make the stone?
Whatever God has created, having a property, it is possible for man to act upon it, but it is very hard to make the stone, yet it may be made.

The soul, the middle nature has it a body?
The colour of Gold is the body of the soul, the middle nature.

By what way can the colour be separated from Gold?
The soul, the middle nature, with its heat and moisture does divide and cojoin both together.

The colour of Gold, is it white, or black or of what sort?
It is white to man's sight, but in spirit it is blue.

In what manner, and out of what is color made?
Nature makes it out of a pure earth and pure water.

Is there a colour in all metals?
Not only in metals, but also in all the elements there is a hidden Color.

Of what virtue, or power is the stone?
The stone can purify all the imperfect metallic bodies from all leprosy, so that they shall be perpetual even to the last judgement. It cures human bodies of all sickness, until a natural death.

Of what sort, and what thing is the soul of a human body?
It is the living fire of a heavenly life, and hath in itself, the soul, the middle nature. By the soul, the middle nature, God is called the creator of all things which are in the world.

Had Virgil the stone?
Not only did he have it, but many Philosophers had it, and have written in diverse ways about it under obscure names and may operations.

How and why is it called the stone?
I tell you that the stone is its name, and there is no permission given me to let you know more.

In what time can the stone be brought to an end?
Twelve months are necessary from the first day of the beginning. In thirty days and earth is generated out of lead, or the nature of the earth makes lead grow. In one hundred days argent vive grows in water. In sixty days complete there grew an air out of tin complete. In the other days of the year, fire grows from gold. In the moment of the year ending, the soul, the middle

nature, descends from heaven into this earth, and mortifies the superior and inferior powers. The image of a manifold victory to consume the war in the heart of the belly of them, even to the perpetual judgement of fire. I will tell you no more.

Pontanus - The Secret Fire

I, John Pontanus, who have travelled into various realms and domains on my quest to know of a certainty what is the Philosophers' Stone, journeying through all parts of the world, found but false Philosophers and deceivers. Studying still, none the less, in the books of the Wise, and my doubts increasing, I discovered the truth: and yet, notwithstanding I had knowledge of the material, I erred two hundred times before finding the operation and practice of that true material.

I commenced first my operations with putrefactions of the Body of this material over a period of nine months but this came to naught. I placed it in the *bain-made* for lengthy periods, erring just the same. I took and placed it in the calcinating fire for three months and proceeded awry. All sorts and kinds of distillation and sublimation spoken of, or apparently spoken of by the Philosophers - Geber, Archelaus, and almost any other - have I attempted and tried, and found equally nothing. In brief, I tried to come at and perfect in every way conceivable the subject of all the Art of Alchemy, be this by manure, bathing, ashes, or the thousand other sorts of fife mentioned by the Philosophers in their works, but nothing did I discover of worth.

It was for this reason that I set myself to study the books of the Philosophers for three years continual, studying among others those of Hermes, whose brief words contain the whole magistry of the Stone; though he speaks quite obscurely of things above and below, of Heaven and of the Earth.

All one's application and care must then be only to know the correct practice in the first, second and third Works. It is not at all the fire of the bath, dung or ashes, nor any of the other fires of which the Philosophers sing or describe for us in their books.

What, then is this fire which perfects and achieves the entire Work, from beginning to end? Certainly all Philosophers have hidden it; but for myself, touched by a moment of pity, I would declare it and the achievement of the whole Work.

The Philosophers' Stone is unique, and one, but hidden and veiled in a multiplicity of different names, and before knowing it you will have seen much struggle: only with difficulty will you come to know it by your own genius. It is watery, airy, fiery and earthy, phlegmatic, choleric, sanguine and melancholy. It is a sulphur and equally Quick Silver.

It has several superfluities which I assure you by the living God, transform themselves into one unique Essence, if only there be our fire. And whoever - believing such to be necessary - would subtract anything from the subject, knows of a certainty nothing of Philosophy. For the superfluous, unclean, foul, scurvy, miry and, in general, entire substance of the subject, is

perfected into one fixed spiritual body, by means of our fire. Which has never been revealed by the Wise, thus making it that but few succeed in this Art; imagining that some foul and unworthy thing must be separated out.

Now must one make appear, and draw out the properties of our fire; if it agree with our material in the way of which I have spoken, that is to say, if it be transmuted with the material. This fire burns the material not at all, nor separates anything from it, nor divides nor puts apart the parts pure and impure, as is told by all Philosophers, but converts the whole subject into purity. It does not sublime as Geber or Arnold and all others who have spoken of sublimation and distillation sublime. And it makes and perfects itself in little time.

This fire is mineral, equal and continual, and never evaporates unless over excited; it has certain of the characteristics of sulphur, is taken and originates elsewhere than in the material. It ruptures, dissolves, and congeals all things, and similarly congeals and calcinates; it is difficult to fmd by industry or by Art. This fire is the epitome and abridgement of the Work in its entirety, taking no other thing else, or very little, and this same fire introduces itself and is of mediocre heat; for with this little fire the whole Work is perfect, and all due and necessary sublimation achieved together.

Those who read Geber and all other Philosophers shall never come to an understanding of it though they live one hundred million years; for this fire may not be discovered but by the sole and profound meditation of the mind, following which one will understand the books, and not otherwise. Error in this Art, consists only in the acquisition of this fire, which converts the material into the Stone of the Wise.

Study, then, this fire, for had I myself found it at the first, I should not have erred two hundred times upon the veritable material. By which am I no longer surprised if so many come not to the accomplishment of the Work.

They err, have erred and will ever err, in that the Philosophers have placed their veritable agent in but one, single thing, which Artephius named, but speaking only for himself. Had I not read Artephius, nor penetrated and understood, never would I have arrived at the accomplishment of the Work.

Here, then, the practice: take the material with all dilligence, grind and pulverise it physically and place it in the fire, that is within the oven; but the degree and proportion of the fire must also be known. To wit, that the external fire excite only the material; and in a little time this fire, without that one put a hand to it in any manner, will assuredly realise the Work in its entirety. For it will purify, corrupt, engender and bring to perfection the whole work, making appear the three principal colours, the black, white and red. And by our fire the medicine will multiply, not only in quantity but also in virtue, if joined with the material in its raw state.

Search, therefore, this fire with all strength of your mind, and you shall reach the goal you have set yourself; for it is this that brings to completion all the stages of the Work, and is the key of all the Philosophers, which they have never revealed in their books. If you think well and deep upon this above-mentioned fire, you will know it. Not otherwise.

Thus, moved by a moment of pity, I have written this; but, and that I satisfy myself, as I made mention above, the fire is in no wise transmuted with the material. I wished to speak this and to warn well the prudent concerning these things, that they spend not in vain their money, but know in advance what it is that they seek and, by this means, arrive at the truth of the Art; not otherwise.

God keep thee.

Paracelsus - The Book Concerning The Tincture Of The Philosophers

Philosopher of the Monarchia, Prince of Spagyrists, Chief Astronomer, Surpassing Physician, and Trismegistus of Mechanical Arcana.

PREFACE.

SINCE you, O Sophist, everywhere abuse me with such fatuous and mendacious words, on the ground that being sprung from rude Helvetia I can understand and know nothing: and also because being a duly qualified physician I still wander from one district to another; therefore I have proposed by means of this treatise to disclose to the ignorant and inexperienced: what good arts existed in the first age; what my art avails against you and yours against me; what should be thought of each, and how my posterity in this age of grace will imitate me. Look at Hermes, Archelaus, and others in the first age: see what Spagyrists and what Philosophers then existed. By this they testify that their enemies, who are your patrons, O Sophist, at the present time are but mere empty forms and idols. Although this would not be attested by those who are falsely considered your authentic fathers and saints, yet the ancient Emerald Table shews more art and experience in Philosophy, Alchemy, Magic, and the like, than could ever be taught by you and your crowd of followers. If you do not yet understand, from the aforesaid facts, what and how great treasures these are, tell me why no prince or king was ever able to subdue the Egyptians. Then tell me why the Emperor Diocletian ordered all the Spagyric books to be burnt (so far as he could lay his hands upon them). Unless the contents of those books had been known, they would have been obliged to bear still his intolerable yoke, - a yoke, O Sophist, which shall one day be put upon the neck of yourself and your colleagues.

From the middle of this age the Monarchy of all the Arts has been at length derived and conferred on me, Theophrastus Paracelsus, Prince of Philosophy and of Medicine. For this purpose I have been chosen by God to extinguish and blot out all the phantasies of elaborate and false works, of delusive and presumptuous words, be they the words of Aristotle, Galen, Avicenna, Mesva, or the dogmas of any among their followers. My theory, proceeding as it does from the light of Nature, can never, through its consistency, pass away or be changed: but in the fifty-eighth year after its millennium and a half it will then begin to flourish. The practice at the same time following upon the theory will be proved by wonderful and incredible signs, so as to be open to mechanics and common people, and they will thoroughly understand how firm and immovable is that Paracelsic Art against the triflings of the

Sophists: though meanwhile that sophistical science has to have its ineptitude propped up and fortified by papal and imperial privileges. In that I am esteemed by you a mendicant and vagabond sophist, the Danube and the Rhine will answer that accusation, though I hold my tongue. Those calumnies of yours falsely devised against me have often displeased many courts and princes, many imperial cities, the knightly order, and the nobility. I have a treasure hidden in a certain city called Weinden, belonging to Forum Julii, at an inn, - a treasure which neither you, Leo of Rome, nor you, Charles the German, could purchase with all your substance. Although the signed star has been applied to the arcanum of your names, it is known to none but the sons of the divine Spagyric Art. So then, you wormy and lousy Sophist, since you deem the monarch of arcana a mere ignorant, fatuous, and prodigal quack, now, in this mid age, I determine in my present treatise to disclose the honourable course of procedure in these matters, the virtues and preparation of the celebrated Tincture of the Philosophers for the use and honour of all who love the truth, and in order that all who despise the true arts may be reduced to poverty. By this arcanum the last age shall be illuminated clearly and compensated for all its losses by the gift of grace and the reward of the spirit of truth, so that since the beginning of the world no similar germination of the intelligence and of wisdom shall ever have been heard of. In the meantime, vice will not be able to suppress the good, nor will the resources of those vicious persons, many though they be, cause any loss to the upright.

THE BOOK CONCERNING THE TINCTURE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS.

CHAPTER I.

I, PHILIPPUS Theophrastus Paracelsus Bombast, say that, by Divine grace, many ways have been sought to the Tincture of the Philosophers, which finally all came to the same scope and end. Hermes Trismegistus, the Egyptian, approached this task in his own method. Orus, the Greek, observed the same process. Hali, the Arabian, remained firm in his order. But Albertus Magnus, the German, followed also a lengthy process. Each one of these advanced in proportion to his own method; nevertheless, they all arrive at one and the same end, at a long life, so much desired by the philosophers, and also at an honourable sustenance and means of preserving that life in this Valley of Misery. Now at this time, I, Theophrastus Paracelsus Bombast, Monarch of the Arcana, am endowed by God with special gifts for this end, that every searcher after this supreme philosophic work may be forced to imitate and to follow me, be he Italian, Pole, Gaul, German, or whatsoever or whosoever he be. Come hither after me, all you philosophers, astronomers, and spagyrists, of however lofty a name ye may be, I will show and open to you, Alchemists and Doctors, who are exalted by me with the most consummate labours, this corporeal regeneration. I will teach you the tincture, the arcanum1, the quintessence, wherein lie hid the foundations of all mysteries and of all works. For every person may and ought to believe in another only in those matters, which he has tried by fire. If any one shall have brought forward anything contrary to this method of experimentation in the Spagyric Art or in Medicine, there is no reason for your belief in him, since, experimentally, through the agency of fire, the true is separated from the false. The light of Nature indeed is created in this way, that by means thereof the proof or trial of everything may appear, but only to those who walk in this light. With this light we will teach,

by the very best methods of demonstration, that all those who before me have approached this so difficult province with their own fancies and acute speculations have, to their own loss, incurred the danger of their foolishness. On which account, from my standpoint, many rustics have been ennobled; but, on the other hand, through the speculative and opinionative art of these many nobles have been changed into clowns, and since they carried golden mountains in their head before they had put their hand to the fire. First of all, then, there must be learnt - digestions, distillations, sublimations, reverberations, extractions, solutions, coagulations, fermentations, fixations, and every instrument which is requisite for this work must be mastered by experience, such as glass vessels, cucurbites, circulators, vessels of Hermes, earthen vessels, baths, blast-furnaces, reverberatories, and instruments of like kind, also marble, coals, and tongs. Thus at length you will be able to profit in Alchemy and in Medicine.

But so long as, relying on fancy and opinion, you cleave to your fictitious books, you are fitted and predestinated for no one of these things.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING THE DEFINITION OF THE SUBJECT AND MATTER OF THE TINCTURE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS.

Before I come, then, to the process of the Tincture, it is needful that I open to you the subject thereof: for, up to the present time, this has always been kept in a specially occult way by the lovers of truth. So, then, the matter of the Tincture (when you understand me in a Spagyrical sense) is a certain thing which, by the art of Vulcan2, passes out of three essences into one essence, or it may remain. But, that I may give it its proper name, according to the use of the ancients, though it is called by many the Red Lion, still it is known by few. This, by the aid of Nature and the skill of the Artist himself, can be transmuted into a White Eagle, so that out of one two are produced; and beyond this the brightness of gold does not shine so much for the Spagyrist as do these two when kept in one. Now, if you do not understand the use of the Cabalists and the old astronomers, you are not born by God for the Spagyric art, or chosen by Nature for the work of Vulcan, or created to open your mouth concerning Alchemical Arts. The matter of the Tincture, then, is a very great pearl and a most precious treasure, and the noblest thing next to the manifestation of the Most High and the consideration of men which can exist upon earth. This is the Lili of Alchemy and of Medicine, which the philosophers have so diligently sought after, but, through the failure of entire knowledge and complete preparation, they have not progressed to the perfect end thereof. By means of their investigations and experiments, only the initial stage of the Tincture has been given to us; but the true foundation, which my colleagues must imitate, has been left for me, so that no one should mingle their shadows with our good intentions. I, by right after my long experiences, correct the Spagyrists, and separate the false or the erroneous from the true, since, by long investigations, I have found reasons why I should be able justly to blame and to change diverse things. If, indeed, I had found out experiments of the ancients better than my own, I should scarcely have taken up such great labours as, for the sake, the utility, and the advantage of all good Alchemists, I have undergone willingly. Since, then, the subject of the

Tincture has been sufficiently declared, so that it scarcely could or ought to be exceeded in fidelity between two brothers, I approach its preparation, and after I have laid down the experiences of the first age, I wish to add my own inventions; to which at last the Age of Grace will by-and-by give its adhesion, whichever of the patriarchs, O Sophist, you, in the meantime, shall have made leaders.

CHAPTER III.

CONCERNING THE PROCESS OF THE ANCIENTS FOR THE TINCTURE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS, AND A MORE COMPENDIOUS METHOD BY PARACELSUS.

The old Spagyrists putrefied Lili for a philosophical month, and afterwards distilled therefrom the moist spirits, until at length the dry spirits were elevated. They again imbued the caput mortuum with moist spirits, and drew them off from it frequently by distillation until the dry spirits were all elevated. Then afterwards they united the moisture that had been drawn off and the dry spirits by means of a pelican, three or four times, until the whole Lili remained dry at the bottom. Although early experience gave this process before fixation, none the less our ancestors often attained a perfect realisation of their wish by this method. They would, however, have had a shorter way of arriving at the treasure of the Red Lion if they had learnt the agreement of Astronomy with Alchemy, as I have demonstrated it in the Apocalypse of Hermes3. But since every day (as Christ says for the consolation of the faithful) has its own peculiar care, the labour for the Spagyrists before my times has been great and heavy; but this, by the help of the Holy Spirit flowing into us, will, in this last age, be lightened and made clear by my theory and practice, for all those who constantly persevere in their work with patience. For I have tested the properties of Nature, its essences and conditions, and I know its conjunction and resolution, which are the highest and greatest gift for a philosopher, and never understood by the sophists up to this time. When, therefore, the earliest age gave the first experience of the Tincture, the Spagyrists made two things out of one simple. But when afterwards, in the Middle Age, this invention had died out, their successors by diligent scrutiny afterwards came upon the two names of this simple, and they named it with one word, namely, Lili, as being the subject of the Tincture. At length the imitators of Nature putrefied this matter at its proper period just like the seed in the earth, since before this corruption nothing could be born from it, nor any arcanum break forth from it. Afterwards they drew off the moist spirits from the matter, until at length, by the violence of the fire, the dry were also equally sublimated, so that, in this way, just as the rustic does at the proper time of year, they might come to maturity as one after another is wont to ascend and to fall away. Lastly, as after the spring comes summer, they incorporated those fruits and dry spirits, and brought the Magistery of the Tincture to such a point that it came to the harvest, and laid itself out for ripening.

CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING THE PROCESS FOR THE TINCTURE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS, AS IT IS SHORTENED BY PARACELSUS.

The ancient Spagyrists would not have required such lengthened labour and such wearisome repetition if they had learnt and practised their work in my school. They would have obtained their wish just as well, with far less expense and labour. But at this time, when Theophrastus Paracelsus has arrived as the Monarch of Arcana, the opportunity is at hand for finding out those things which were occult to all Spagyrists before me. Wherefore I say, Take only the rose-coloured blood from the Lion and the gluten from the Eagle. When you have mixed these, coagulate them according to the old process, and you will have the Tincture of the Philosophers, which an infinite number have sought after and very few have found. Whether you will or not, sophist, this Magistery is in Nature itself, a wonderful thing of God above Nature, and a most precious treasure in this Valley of Sorrows. If you look at it from without it seems a paltry thing to transmute another into something far more noble than it was before. But you must, nevertheless, allow this, and confess that it is a miracle produced by the Spagyrist, who by the art of his preparation corrupts a visible body which is externally vile, from which he excites another most noble and most precious essence. If you, in like manner, have learnt anything from the light of Aristotle, or from us, or from the rules of Serapio, come forth, and bring that knowledge experimentally to light. Preserve now the right of the Schools, as becomes a lover of honour and a doctor. But if you know nothing and can do nothing, why do you despise me as though I were an irrational Helvetian cow, and inveigh against me as a wandering vagabond? Art is a second Nature and a universe of its own, as experience witnesses, and demonstrates against you and your idols. Sometimes, therefore, the Alchemist compounds certain simples, which he afterwards corrupts according to his need, and prepares thence another thing. For thus very often out of many things one is made, which effects more than Nature of herself can do, as in Gastaynum it is perfectly well known that Venus is produced from Saturn; in Carinthia, Luna out of Venus; and in Hungary, Sol out of Luna; to pass over in silence for the time being the transmutations of other natural objects, which were well known to the Magi, and more wonderfully than Ovid narrates in his Metamorphoses do they come to the light. That you may rightly understand me, seek your Lion in the East, and your Eagle in the South, for this our work which has been undertaken. You will not find better instruments than Hungary and Istria produce. But if you desire to lead from unity by duality in trinity with equal permutation of each, then you should direct your journey to the South; so in Cyprus shall you gain all your desire, concerning which we must not dilate more profusely than we have done at present. There are still many more of these arcana which exhibit transmutations, though they are known to few. And although these may by the Lord God be made manifest to anyone, still, the rumour of this Art does not on that account at once break forth, but the Almighty gives therewith the understanding how to conceal these and other like arts even to the coming of Elias the Artist, at which time there shall be nothing so occult that it shall not be revealed. You also see with your eyes (though there is no need to speak of these things, which may be taken derisively by some) that in the fire of Sulphur is a great tincture for gems, which, indeed, exalts them to a loftier degree than Nature by herself could do. But this gradation of metals and gems shall be omitted by me in this place, since I have written sufficiently about it in my Secret of Secrets, in my book on the Vexations of Alchemists, and abundantly elsewhere. As I have begun the process of our ancestors with the Tincture of the Philosophers, I will now perfectly conclude it.

CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING THE CONCLUSION OF THE PROCESS OF THE ANCIENTS, MADE BY PARACELSUS.

Lastly, the ancient Spagyrists having placed Lili in a pelican and dried it, fixed it by means of a regulated increase of the fire, continued so long until from blackness, by permutation into all the colours, it became red as blood, and therewith assumed the condition of a salamander. Rightly, indeed, did they proceed with such labour, and in the same way it is right and becoming that everyone should proceed who seeks this pearl. It will be very difficult for me to make this clearer to you unless you shall have learnt in the School of the Alchemists to observe the degrees of the fire, and also to change your vessels. For then at length you will see that soon after your Lili shall have become heated in the Philosophic Egg, it becomes, with wonderful appearances, blacker than the crow; afterwards, in succession of time, whiter than the swan; and at last, passing through a yellow colour, it turns out more red than any blood. Seek, seek, says the first Spagyrist, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you. It would be impious and indecorous to put food in the mouth of a perfidious bird. Let her rather fly to it, even as I, with others before me, have been compelled to do. But follow true Art; for this will lead you to its perfect knowledge. It is not possible that anything should here be set down more fully or more clearly than I have before spoken. Let your Pharisaical schools teach you what they will from their unstable and slippery foundation, which reaches not its end or its aim. When at length you shall have been taught as accurately as possible the Alchemistic Art, nothing in the nature of things shall then at length be so difficult which cannot be made manifest to you by the aid of this Art. Nature, indeed, herself does not bring forth anything into the light which is advanced to its highest perfection, as can be seen in this place from the unity, or the union, of our duality. But a man ought by Spagyric preparations to lead it thither where it was ordained by Nature. Let this have been sufficiently said by me, concerning the process of the ancients and my correction of the Tincture of the Philosophers, so far as relates to its preparation.

Moreover, since now we have that treasure of the Egyptians in our hands, it remains that we turn it to our use: and this is offered to us by the Spagyric Magistery in two ways. According to the former mode it can be applied for the renewing of the body; according to the latter it is to be used for the transmutation of metals. Since, then, I, Theophrastus Paracelsus, have tried each of them in different ways, I am willing to put them forward and to describe them according to the signs indeed of the work, and as in experience and proof they appeared to me better and more perfectly.

CHAPTER VI.

CONCERNING THE TRANSMUTATION OF METALS BY THE PERFECTION OF MEDICINE.

If the Tincture of the Philosophers is to be used for transmutation, a pound of it must be projected on a thousand pounds of melted Sol. Then, at length, will a Medicine have been prepared for transmuting the leprous moisture of the metals. This work is a wonderful one in the light of Nature, namely, that by the Magistery, or the operation of the Spagyrist, a metal, which formerly existed, should perish, and another be produced. This fact has rendered that same Aristotle, with his ill-founded philosophy, fatuous. For truly, when the rustics in Hungary cast iron at the proper season into a certain fountain, commonly called Zifferbrunnen, it is consumed into rust, and when this is liquefied with a blast-fire, it soon exists as pure Venus, and never more returns to iron. Similarly, in the mountain commonly called Kuttenberg, they obtain a lixivium out of marcasites, in which iron is forthwith turned into Venus of a high grade, and more malleable than the other produced by Nature. These things, and more like them, are known to simple men rather than to sophists, namely, those which turn one appearance of a metal into another. And these things, moreover, through the remarkable contempt of the ignorant, and partly, too, on account of the just envy of the artificers, remain almost hidden. But I myself, in Istria, have often brought Venus to more than twenty-four (al. 38) degrees, so that the colour of Sol could not mount higher, consisting of Antimony or or Quartal, which Venus I used in all respects as other kinds.

But though the old artists were very desirous of this arcanum, and sought it with the greatest diligence, nevertheless, very few could bring it by means of a perfect preparation to its end. For the transmutation of an inferior metal into a superior one brings with it many difficulties and obstacles, as the change of Jove into Luna, or Venus into Sol. Perhaps on account of their sins God willed that the Magnalia of Nature should be hidden from many men. For sometimes, when this Tincture has been prepared by artists, and they were not able to reduce their projection to work its effects, it happened that, by their carelessness and bad guardianship, this was eaten up by fowls, whose feathers thereupon fell off, and, as I myself have seen, grew again. In this way transmutation, through its abuse from the carelessness of the artists, came into Medicine and Alchemy. For when they were unable to use the Tincture according to their desire, they converted the same to the renovation of men, as shall be heard more at large in the following chapter.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCERNING THE RENOVATION OF MEN.

Some of the first and primitive philosophers of Egypt have lived by means of this Tincture for a hundred and fifty years. The life of many, too, has been extended and prolonged to several centuries, as is most clearly shewn in different histories, though it seems scarcely credible to any one. For its power is so remarkable that it extends the life of the body beyond what is possible to its congenital nature, and keeps it so firmly in that condition that it lives on in safety from all infirmities. And although, indeed, the body at length comes to old age, nevertheless, it still appears as though it were established in its primal youth.

So, then, the Tincture of the Philosophers is a Universal Medicine, and consumes all diseases, by whatsoever name they are called, just like an invisible fire. The dose is very small, but its effect is most powerful. By means thereof I have cured the leprosy, venereal disease, dropsy, the falling sickness, colic, scab, and similar afflictions; also lupus, cancer, noli-me-tangere, fistulas, and the whole race of internal diseases, more surely than one could believe. Of this fact Germany, France, Italy, Poland, Bohemia, etc., will afford the most ample evidence.

Now, Sophist, look at Theophrastus Paracelsus. How can your Apollo, Machaon, and Hippocrates stand against me? This is the Catholicum of the Philosophers, by which all these philosophers have attained long life for resisting diseases, and they have attained this end entirely and most effectually, and so, according to their judgment, they named it The Tincture of the Philosophers. For what can there be in the whole range of medicine greater than such purgation of the body, by means whereof all superfluity is radically removed from it and transmuted? For when the seed is once made sound all else is perfected. What avails the ill-founded purgation of the sophists since it removes nothing as it ought? This, therefore, is the most excellent foundation of a true physician, the regeneration of the nature, and the restoration of youth. After this, the new essence itself drives out all that is opposed to it. To effect this regeneration, the powers and virtues of the Tincture of the Philosophers were miraculously discovered, and up to this time have been used in secret and kept concealed by true Spagyrists.

Paracelsus - The Aurora of the philosophers

CHAPTER I.

CONCERNING THE ORIGIN OF THE PHILOSOPHERS' STONE.

ADAM was the first inventor of arts, because he had knowledge of all things as well after the Fall as before[2]. Thence he predicted the world's destruction by water. From this cause, too, it came about that his successors erected two tables of stone, on which they engraved all natural arts in hieroglyphical characters, in order that their posterity might also become acquainted with this prediction, that so it might be heeded, and provision made in the time of danger. Subsequently, Noah found one of these tables under Mount Araroth, after the Deluge. In this table were described the courses of the upper firmament and of the lower globe, and also of the planets. At length this universal knowledge was divided into several parts, and lessened in its vigour and power. By means of this separation, one man became an astronomer, another a magician, another a cabalist, and a fourth an alchemist. Abraham, that Vulcanic Tubalcain, a consummate astrologer and arithmetician, carried the Art out of the land of Canaan into Egypt, whereupon the Egyptians rose to so great a height and dignity that this wisdom was derived from them by other nations. The patriarch Jacob painted, as it were, the sheep with various colours; and this was done by magic: for in the theology of the Chaldeans, Hebrews, Persians, and Egyptians, they held these arts to be the highest philosophy, to be learnt by their chief nobles and priests. So it was in the time of Moses, when both thc priests and also thc

physicians were chosen from among the Magi – the priests for the judgment of what related to health, especially in the knowledge of leprosy. Moses, likewise, was instructed in the Egyptian schools, at the cost and care of Pharaoh's daughter, so that he excelled in all the wisdom and learning of that people. Thus, too, was it with Daniel, who in his youthful days imbibed the learning of the Chaldeans, so that he became a cabalist. Witness his divine predictions and his exposition of those words, "Mene, Mene, Tecelphares". These words can be understood by the prophetic and cabalistic Art. This cabalistic Art was perfectly familiar to, and in constant use by, Moses and the Prophets. The Prophet Elias foretold many things by his cabalistic numbers. So did the Wise Men of old, by this natural and mystical Art, learn to know God rightly. They abode in His laws, and walked in His statutes with great firmness. It is also evident in the Book of Samuel, that the Berelists did not follow the devil's part, but became, by Divine permission, partakers of visions and veritable apparitions, whereof we shall treat more at large in the Book of Supercelestial Things[3]. This gift is granted by the Lord God to those priests who walk in the Divine precepts. It was a custom among the Persians never to admit any one as king unless he were a Wise Man, pre-eminent in reality as well as in name. This is clear from the customary name of their kings; for they were called Wise Men. Such were those Wise Men and Persian Magi who came from the East to seek out thc Lord Jesus, and are called natural priests. The Egyptians, also, having obtained this magic and philosophy from the Chaldeans and Persians, desired that their priests should learn the same wisdom; and they became so fruitful and successful therein that all the neighbouring countries admired them. For this reason Hermes was so truly named Trismegistus, because he was a king, a priest, a prophet, a magician, and a sophist of natural things. Such another was Zoroaster.

CHAPTER II.

WHEREIN IS DECLARED THAT THE GREEKS DREW A LARGE PART OF THEIR LEARNING FROM THE EGYPTIANS; AND HOW IT CAME FROM THEM TO US.

When a son of Noah possessed the third part of the world after the Flood, this Art broke into Chaldaea and Persia, and thence spread into Egypt. The Art having been found out by the superstitious and idolatrous Greeks, some of them who were wiser than the rest betook themselves to the Chaldeans and Egyptians, so that they might draw the same wisdom from their schools. Since, however, the theological study of the law of Moses did not satisfy them, they trusted to their own peculiar genius, and fell away from the right foundation of those natural secrets and arts. This is evident from their fabulous conceptions, and from their errors respecting the doctrine of Moses. It was the custom of the Egyptians to put forward the traditions of that surpassing wisdom only in enigmatical figures and abstruse histories and terms. This was afterwards followed by Homer with marvellous poetical skill; and Pythagoras was also acquainted with it, seeing that he comprised in his writings many things out of the law of Moses and the Old Testament. In like manner, Hippocrates, Thales of

Miletus, Anaxagoras, Democritus, and others, did not scruple to fix their minds on the same subject. And yet none of them were practised in the true Astrology, Geometry, Arithmetic, or Medicine, because their pride prevented this, since they would not admit disciples belonging to other nations than their own. Even when they had got some insight from the Chaldeans and Egyptians, they became more arrogant still than they were before by Nature, and without any diffidence propounded the subject substantially indeed, but mixed with subtle fictions or falsehoods; and then they attempted to elaborate a certain kind of philosophy which descended from them to the Latins. These in their turn, being educated herewith, adorned it with their own doctrines, and by these the philosophy was spread over Europe. Many academies were founded for the propagation of their dogmas and rules, so that the young might be instructed; and this system flourishes with the Germans, and other nations, right down to the present day.

CHAPTER III.

WHAT WAS TAUGHT IN THE SCHOOLS OF THE EGYPTIANS.

The Chaldeans, Persians, and Egyptians had all of them the same knowledge of the secrets of Nature, and also the same religion. It was only the names that differed. The Chaldeans and Persians called their doctrine Sophia and Magic[4]; and the Egyptians, because of the sacrifice, called their wisdom priestcraft. The magic of the Persians, and the theology of the Egyptians, were both of them taught in the schools of old. Though there were many schools and learned men in Arabia, Africa, and Greece, such as Albumazar, Abenzagel, Geber, Rhasis, and Avicenna among the Arabians; and among the Greeks, Machaon, Podalirius, Pythagoras, Anaxagoras, Democritus, Plato, Aristotle, and Rhodianus; still there were different opinions amongst them as to the wisdom of the Egyptian on points wherein they themselves differed, and whereupon they disagreed with it. For this reason Pythagoras could not be called a wise man, because the Egyptian priestcraft and wisdom were not perpectly taught, although he received therefrom many mysteries and arcana; and that Anaxagoras had received a great many as well, is clear from his discussions on the subject of Sol and its Stone, which he left behind him after his death. Yet he differed in many respects from the Egyptians. Even they would not be called wise men or Magi; but, following Pythagoras, they assumed the name of philosophy: yet they gathered no more than a few gleams like shadows from the magic of the Persians and the Egyptians. But Moses, Abraham, Solomon, Adam, and the wise men that came from the East to Christ, were true Magi, divine sophists and cabalists. Of this art and wisdom the Greeks knew very little or nothing at all; and therefore we shall leave this philosophical wisdom of the Greeks as being a mere speculation, utterly distinct and separate from other true arts and sciences.

CHAPTER IV.

WHAT MAGI THE CHALDEANS, PERSIANS, AND EGYPTIANS WERE.

Many persons have endeavoured to investigate and make use of the secret magic of these wise men; but it has not yet been accomplished. Many even of our own age exalt Trithemius, others Bacon and Agrippa, for magic and the cabala[5] – two things apparently quite distinct – not knowing why they do so. Magic, indeed, is an art and faculty whereby the elementary bodies, their fruits, properties, virtues, and hidden operations are comprehended. But the cabala, by a subtle understanding of the Scriptures, seems to trace out the way to God for men, to shew them how they may act with Him, and prophesy from Him; for the cabala is full of divine mysteries, even as Magic is full of natural secrets. It teaches of and foretells from the nature of things to come as well as of things present, since its operation consists in knowing the inner constitution of all creatures, of celestial as well as terrestrial bodies: what is latent within them; what are their occult virtues; for what they were originally designed, and with what properties they are endowed. These and the like subjects are the bonds wherewith things celestial are bound up with things of the earth, as may sometimes be seen in their operation even with the bodily eyes. Such a conjunction of celestial influences, whereby the heavenly virtues acted upon inferior bodies, was formerly called by the Magi a Gamahea[6], or the marriage of the celestial powers and properties with elementary bodies. Hence ensued the excellent commixtures of all bodies, celestial and terrestrial, namely, of the sun and planets, likewise vegetables, minerals, and animals.

The devil attempted with his whole force and endeavour to darken this light; nor was he wholly frustrated in his hopes, for he deprived all Greece of it, and, in place thereof, introduced among that people human speculations and simple blasphemies against God and against His Son. Magic, it is true, had its origin in the Divine Ternary and arose from the Trinity of God. For God marked all His creatures with this Ternary and engraved its hieroglyph on them with His own finger. Nothing in the nature of things can be assigned or produced that lacks this magistery of the Divine Ternary, or that does not even ocularly prove it. The creature teaches us to understand and see the Creator Himself, as St. Paul testifies to the Romans. This covenant of the Divine Ternary, diffused throughout the whole substance of things, is indissoluble. By this, also, we have the secrets of all Nature from the four elements. For the Ternary, with the magical Quaternary, produces a perfect Septenary, endowed with many arcana and demonstrated by things which are known. When the Quaternary rests in the Ternary, then arises the Light of the World on the horizon of eternity, and by the assistance of God gives us the whole bond. Here also it refers to the virtues and operations of all creatures, and to their use, since they are stamped and marked with their arcana, signs, characters, and figures, so that there is left in them scarcely the smallest occult point which is not made clear on examination. Then when the Quaternary and the Ternary mount to the Denary is accomplished their retrogression or reduction to unity. Herein is comprised all the occult wisdom of things which God has made plainly manifest to men, both by His word and by the creatures of His hands, so that they may have a true knowledge of them. This shall be made more clear in another place.

CHAPTER V.

CONCERNING THE CHIEF AND SUPREME ESSENCE OF THINGS.

The Magi in their wisdom asserted that all creatures might be brought to one unified substance, which substance they affirm may, by purifications and purgations, attain to so high a degree of subtlety, such divine nature and occult property, as to work wonderful results. For they considered that by returning to the earth, and by a supreme magical separation, a certain perfect substance would come forth, which is at length, by many industrious and prolonged preparations, exalted and raised up above the range of vegetable substances into mineral, above mineral into metallic, and above perfect metallic substances into a perpetual and divine Quintessence[7], including in itself the essence of all celestial and terrestrial creatures. The Arabs and Greeks, by the occult characters and hieroglyphic descriptions of the Persians and the Egyptians, attained to secret and abstruse mysteries. When these were obtained and partially understood they saw with their own eyes, in the course of experimenting, many wonderful and strange effects. But since the supercelestial operations lay more deeply hidden than their capacity could penetrate, they did not call this a supercelestial arcanum according to the institution of the Magi, but the arcanum of the Philosophers' Stone according to the counsel and judgment of Pythagoras. Whoever obtained this Stone overshadowed it with various enigmatical figures, deceptive resemblances, comparisons, and fictitious titles, so that its matter might remain occult. Very little or no knowledge of it therefore can be had from them.

CHAPTER VI.

CONCERNING THE DIFFERENT ERRORS AS TO ITS DISCOVERY AND KNOWLEDGE.

The philosophers have prefixed most occult names to this matter of the Stone, grounded on mere similitudes. Arnold, observing this, says in his "Rosary" that the greatest difficulty is to find out the material of this Stone; for they have called it vegetable, animal, and mineral, but not according to the literal sense, which is well known to such wise men as have had experience of divine secrets and the miracles of this same Stone. For example, Raymond Lully's "Lunaria" may be cited. This gives flowers of admirable virtues familiar to the philosophers themselves; but it was not the intention of those philosophers that you should think they meant thereby any projection upon metals, or that any such preparations should be made; but the abstruse mind of the philosophers had another intention. In like manner, they called their matter by the name of Martagon, to which they applied an occult alchemical operation; when, notwithstanding that name, it denotes nothing more than a hidden similitude. Moreover, no small error has arisen in the liquid of vegetables, with which a good many have sought to coagulate Mercury[8], and afterwards to convert it with fixatory waters into Luna, since they supposed that he who in this way could coagulate it without the aid of metals would succeed in becoming the chief master. Now, although the liquids of some vegetables do effect this, yet the result is due merely to the resin, fat, and earthy sulphur with which they abound. This attracts to itself the moisture of the Mercury which rises with the substance in the process of coagulation, but without any advantage resulting. I am well

assured that no thick and external Sulphur in vegetables is adapted for a perfect projection in Alchemy, as some have found out to their cost. Certain persons have, it is true, coagulated Mercury with the white and milky juice of tittinal, on account of the intense heat which exists therein; and they have called that liquid "Lac Virginis"; yet this is a false basis. The same may be asserted concerning the juice of celandine, although it colours just as though it were endowed with gold. Hence people conceived a vain idea. At a certain fixed time they rooted up this vegetable, from which they sought for a soul or quintessence, wherefrom they might make a coagulating and transmuting tincture. But hence arose nothing save a foolish error.

CHAPTER VII.

CONCERNING THE ERRORS OF THOSE WHO SEEK THE STONE IN VEGETABLES.

Some alchemists have pressed a juice out of celandine, boiled it to thickness, and put it in the sun, so that it might coagulate into a hard mass, which, being afterwards pounded into a fine black powder, should turn Mercury by projection into Sol. This they also found to be in vain. Others mixed Sal Ammoniac with this powder; others the Colcothar of Vitriol, supposing that they would thus arrive at their desired result. They brought it by their solutions into a yellow water, so that the Sal Ammoniac allowed an entrance of the tincture into the substance of the Mercury. Yet again nothing was accomplished. There are some again who, instead of the abovementioned substances, take the juices of persicaria, bufonaria, dracunculus, the leaves of willow, tithymal, cataputia, flammula, and the like, and shut them up in a glass vessel with Mercury for some days, keeping them in ashes. Thus it comes about that the Mercury is turned into ashes, but deceptively and without any result. These people were misled by the vain rumours of the vulgar, who give it out that he who is able to coagulate Mercury without metals has the entire Magistery, as we have said before. Many, too, have extracted salts, oils, and sulphurs artificially out of vegetables, but quite in vain. Out of such salts, oils, and sulphurs no coagulation of Mercury, or perfect projection, or tincture, can be made. But when the philosophers compare their matter to a certain golden tree of seven boughs, they mean that such matter includes all the seven metals in its sperm, and that in it these lie hidden. On this account they called their matter vegetable, because, as in the case of natural trees, they also in their time produce various flowers. So, too, the matter of the Stone shews most beautiful colours in the production of its flowers. The comparison, also, is apt, because a certain matter rises out of the philosophical earth, as if it were a thicket of branches and sprouts: like a sponge growing on the earth. They say, therefore, that the fruit of their tree tends towards heaven. So, then, they put forth that the whole thing hinged upon natural vegetables, though not as to its matter, because their stone contains within itself a body, soul, and spirit, as vegetables do.

CHAPTER VIII.

CONCERNING THOSE WHO HAVE SOUGHT THE STONE IN ANIMALS.

They have also, by a name based only on resemblances, called this matter Lac Virginis, and the Blessed Blood of Rosy Colour, which, nevertheless, suits only the prophets and sons of God. Hence the sophists[9] gathered that this philosophical matter was in the blood of animals or of man. Sometimes, too, because they are nourished by vegetables, others have sought it in hairs, in salt of urine, in rebis; others in hens' eggs, in milk, and in the calx of egg shells, with all of which they thought they would be able to fix Mercury. Some have extracted salt out of foetid urine, supposing that to be the matter of the Stone. Some persons, again, have considered the little stones found in rebis to be the matter. Others have macerated the membranes of eggs in a sharp lixivium, with which they also mixed calcined egg shells as white as snow. To these they have attributed the arcanum of fixation for the transmutation of Mercury. Others, comparing the white of the egg to silver and the yolk to gold, have chosen it for their matter, mixing with it common salt, sal ammoniac, and burnt tartar. These they shut up in a glass vessel, and puri6ed in a *Balneum Maris* until the white matter became as red as blood. This, again, they distilled into a most offensive liquid, utterly useless for the purpose they had in view. Others have purified the white and yolk of eggs; from which has been generated a basilisk. This they burnt to a deep red powder, and sought to tinge with it, as they learnt from the treatise of Cardinal Gilbert. Many, again, have macerated the galls of oxen, mixed with common salt, and distilled this into a liquid, with which they moistened the cementary powders, supposing that, by means of this Magistery, they would tinge their metals. This they called by the name of "a part with a part", and thence came – just nothing. Others have attempted to transmute tutia by the addition of dragon's blood and other substances, and also to change copper and electrum into gold. Others, according to the Venetian Art, as they call it, take twenty lizard-like animals, more or less, shut them up in a vessel, and make them mad with hunger, so that they may devour one another until only one of them survives. This one is then fed with filings of copper or of electrum. They suppose that this animal, simply by the digestion of his stomach, will bring about the desired transmutation. Finally, they burn this animal into a red powder, which they thought must be gold; but they were deceived. Others, again, having burned the fishes called truitas (? trouts), have sometimes, upon melting them, found some gold in them; but there is no other reason for it than this: Those fish sometimes in rivers and streams meet with certain small scales and sparks of gold, which they eat. It is seldom, however, that such deceivers are found, and then chiefly in the courts of princes. The matter of the philosophers is not to be sought in animals: this I announce to all. Still, it is evident that the philosophers called their Stone animal, because in their final operations the virtue of this most excellent fiery mystery caused an obscure liquid to exude drop by drop from the matter in their vessels. Hence they predicted that, in the last times, there should come a most pure man upon the earth, by whom the redemption of the world should be brought about; and that this man should send forth bloody drops of a red colour, by means of which he should redeem the world from sin. In the same way, after its own kind, the blood of their Stone freed the leprous metals from their infirmities and contagion. On these grounds, therefore, they supposed they were justified in saying that their Stone was animal. Concerning this mystery Mercurius speaks as follows to King Calid: –

"This mystery it is permitted only to the prophets of God to know. Hence it comes to pass that this Stone is called animal, because in its blood a soul lies hid. It is likewise composed of body, spirit, and soul. For the same reason they called it their microcosm, because it has the likeness of all things in the world, and thence they termed it animal, as Plato named the great world an animal".

CHAPTER IX.

CONCERNING THOSE WHO HAVE SOUGHT THE STONE IN MINERALS.

Hereto are added the many ignorant men who suppose the stone to be three-fold, and to be hidden in a triple genus, namely, vegetable, animal, and mineral. Hence it is that they have sought for it in minerals. Now, this is far from the opinion of the philosophers. They affirm that their stone is uniformly vegetable, animal, and mineral. Now, here note that Nature has distributed its mineral sperm into various kinds, as, for instance, into sulphurs, salts, boraxes, nitres, ammoniacs, alums, arsenics, atraments, vitriols, tutias, haematites, orpiments, realgars, magnesias, cinnabar, antimony, talc, cachymia, marcasites, etc. In all these Nature has not yet attained to our matter; although in some of the species named it displays itself in a wonderful aspect for the transmutation of imperfect metals that are to be brought to perfection. Truly, long experience and practice with fire shew many and various permutations in the matter of minerals, not only from one colour to another, but from one essence to another, and from imperfection to perfection. And, although Nature has, by means of prepared minerals, reached some perfection, yet philosophers will not have it that the matter of the philosophic stone proceeds out of any of the minerals, although they say that their stone is universal. Hence, then, the sophists take occasion to persecute Mercury himself with various torments, as with sublimations, coagulations, mercurial waters, aquafortis, and the like. All these erroneous ways should be avoided, together with other sophistical preparations of minerals, and the purgations and fixations of spirits and metals. Wherefore all the preparations of the stone, as of Geber, Albertus Magnus, and the rest, are sophistical. Their purgations, cementations, sublimations, distillations, rectifications, circulations, putrefactions, conjunctions, solutions, ascensions, coagulations, calcinations, and incinerations are utterly profitless, both in the tripod, in the athanor, in the reverberatory furnace, in the melting furnace, the accidioneum, in dung, ashes, sand, or what not; and also in the cucurbite, the pelican, retort, phial, fixatory, and the rest. The same opinion must be passed on the sublimation of Mercury by mineral spirits, for the white and the red, as by vitriol, saltpetre, alum, crocuses, etc., concerning all which subjects that sophist, John de Rupescissa, romances in his treatise on the White and Red Philosophic Stone. Taken altogether, these are merely deceitful dreams. Avoid also the particular sophistry of Geber; for example, his sevenfold sublimations or mortifications, and also the revivifications of Mercury, with his preparations of salts of urine, or salts made by a sepulchre, all which things are untrustworthy. Some others have endeavoured to fix Mercury with: the sulphurs of minerals and metals, but have been greatly deceived. It is true I have seen Mercury by this Art, and by

such fixations, brought into a metallic body resembling and counterfeiting good silver in all respects; but when brought to the test it has shewn itself to be false.

CHAPTER X.

CONCERNING THOSE WHO HAVE SOUGHT THE STONE AND ALSO PARTICULARS IN MINERALS.

Some sophists have tried to squeeze out a fixed oil from Mercury seven times sublimed and as often dissolved by means of aquafortis. In this way they attempt to bring imperfect metals to perfection: but they have been obliged to relinquish their vain endeavour. Some have purged vitriol seven times by calcination, solution, and coagulation, with the addition of two parts of sal ammoniac, and by sublimation, so that it might be resolved into a white water, to which they have added a third part of quicksilver, that it might be coagulated by water. Then afterwards they have sublimated the Mercury several times from the vitriol and sal ammoniac, so that it became a stone. This stone they affirmed, being conceived of the vitriol, to be the Red Sulphur of the philosophers, with which they have, by means of solutions and coagulations, made some progress in attaining the stone; but in projection it has all come to nothing. Others have coagulated Mercury by water of alum into a hard mass like alum itself; and this they have fruitlessly fixed with fixatory waters. The sophists propose to themselves very many ways of fixing Mercury, but to no purpose, for therein nothing perfect or constant can be had. It is therefore in vain to add minerals thereto by sophistical processes, since by all of them he is stirred up to greater malice, is rendered more lively, and rather brought to greater impurity than to any kind of perfection. So, then, the philosophers' matter is not to be sought from thence. Mercury is somewhat imperfect; and to bring it to perfection will be very difficult, nay, impossible for any sophist. There is nothing therein that can be stirred up or compelled to perfection. Some have taken arsenic several times sublimated, and frequently dissolved with oil of tartar and coagulated. This they have pretended to fix, and by it to turn copper into silver. This, however, is merely a sophistical whitening, for arsenic cannot be fixed[10] unless the operator be an Artist, and knows well its tingeing spirit. Truly in this respect all the philosophers have slept, vainly attempting to accomplish anything thereby. Whoever, therefore, is ignorant as to this spirit, cannot have any hopes of fixing it, or of giving it that power which would make it capable of the virtue of transmutation. So, then, I give notice to all that the whitening of which I have just now spoken is grounded on a false basis, and that by it the copper is deceitfully whitened, but not changed.

Now the sophists have mixed this counterfeit Venus with twice its weight of Luna, and sold it to the goldsmiths and mint-masters, until at last they have transmuted themselves into false coiners – not only those who sold, but those who bought it. Some sophists instead of white arsenic take red, and this has turned out false art; because, however it is prepared, it proves to be nothing but whiteness.

Some, again, have gone further and dealt with common sulphur, which, being so yellow, they have boiled in vinegar, lixivium, or sharpest wines, for a day and a night, until it became

white. Then afterwards they sublimated it from common salt and the calx of eggs, repeating the process several times; yet, still, though white, it has been always combustible. Nevertheless, with this they have endeavoured to fix Mercury and to turn it into gold; but in vain. From this, however, comes the most excellent and beautiful cinnabar that I have ever seen. This they propose to fix with the oil of sulphur by cementation and fixation. It does, indeed, give something of an appearance, but still falls short of the desired object. Others have reduced common sulphur to the form of a hepar, boiling it in vinegar with the addition of linseed oil, or laterine oil, or olive oil. They then pour it into a marble mortar, and make it into the form of a hepar, which they have first distilled into a citrine oil with a gentle fire. But they have found to their loss that they could not do anything in the way of transmuting Luna to Sol as they supposed they would be able. As there is an infinite number of metals, so also there is much variety in the preparation of them: I shall not make further mention of these in this place, because each a mould require a special treatise. Beware also of sophisticated oils of vitriol and antimony. Likewise be on your guard against the oils of the metals, perfect or imperfect, as Sol or Luna; because although the operation of these is most potent in the nature of things, yet the true process is known, even at this day, to very few persons. Abstain also from the sophistical preparations of common mercury, arsenic, sulphur, and the like, by sublimation, descension, fixation by vinegar, saltpetre, tartar, vitriol, sal ammoniac, according to the formulas prescribed in the books of the sophists. Likewise avoid the sophisticated tinctures taken from marcasites and crocus of Mars, and also of that sophistication called by the name of "a part with a part", and of fixed Luna and similar trifles. Although they have some superficial appearance of truth, as the fixation of Luna by little labour and industry, still the progress of the preparation is worthless and weak. Being therefore moved with compassion towards the well meaning operators in this art, I have determined to lay open the whole foundation of philosophy in three separate arcana, namely, in one explained by arsenic, in a second by vitriol, and in a third by antimony; by means of which I will teach the true projection upon Mercury and upon the imperfect metals.

CHAPTER XI.

CONCERNING THE TRUE AND PERFECT SPECIAL ARCANUM OF ARSENIC FOR THE WHITE TINCTURE.

Some persons have written that arsenic is compounded of Mercury and, Sulphur, others of earth and water; but most writers say that it is of the nature of Sulphur. But, however that may be, its nature is such that it transmutes red copper into white. It may also be brought to such a perfect state of preparation as to be able to tinge. But this is not done in the way pointed out by such evil sophists as Geber in "The Sum of Perfection", Albertus Magnus, Aristotle the chemist in "The Book of the Perfect Magistery", Rhasis and Polydorus; for those writers, however many they be, are either themselves in error, or else they write falsely out of sheer envy, and put forth receipts whilst not ignorant of the truth. Arsenic contains within itself three natural spirits. The first is volatile, combustible, corrosive, and penetrating all metals. This spirit whitens Venus and after some days renders it spongy. But this artifice

relates only to those who practise the caustic art. The second spirit is crystalline and sweet. The third is a tingeing spirit separated from the others before mentioned. True philosophers seek for these three natural properties in arsenic with a view to the perfect projection of the wise men[11]. But those barbers who practise surgery seek after that sweet and crystalline nature separated from the tingeing spirit for use in the cure of wounds, buboes, carbuncles, anthrax, and other similar ulcers which are not curable save by gentle means. As for that tingeing spirit, however, unless the pure be separated from the impure in it, the fixed from the volatile, and the secret tincture from the combustible, it will not in any way succeed according to your wish for projection on Mercury, Venus, or any other imperfect metal. All philosophers have hidden this arcanum as a most excellent mystery. This tingeing spirit, separated from the other two as above, you must join to the spirit of Luna, and digest them together for the space of thirty-two days, or until they have assumed a new body. After it has, on the fortieth natural day, been kindled into flame by the heat of the sun, the spirit appears in a bright whiteness, and is endued with a perfect tingeing arcanum. Then it is at length fit for projection, namely, one part of it upon sixteen parts of an imperfect body, according to the sharpness of the preparation. From thence appears shining and most excellent Luna, as though it had been dug from the bowels of the earth.

CHAPTER XII.

GENERAL INSTRUCTION CONCERNING THE ARCANUM OF VITRIOL AND THE RED TINCTURE TO BE EXTRACTED FROM IT.[12]

Vitriol is a very noble mineral among the rest, and was held always in highest estimation by philosophers, because the Most High God has adorned it with wonderful gifts. They have veiled its arcanum in enigmatical figures like the following: "Thou shalt go to the inner parts of the earth, and by rectification thou shalt find the occult stone, a true medicine". By the earth they understood the Vitriol itself; and by the inner parts of the earth its sweetness and redness, because in the occult part of the Vitriol lies hid a subtle, noble, and most fragrant juice, and a pure oil. The method of its production is not to be approached by calcination or by distillation. For it must not be deprived on any account of its green colour. If it were, it would at the same time lose its arcanum and its power. Indeed, it should be observed at this point that minerals, and also vegetables and other like things which shew greenness without, contain within themselves an oil red like blood, which is their arcanum. Hence it is clear that the distillations of the druggists are useless, vain, foolish, and of no value, because these people do not know how to extract the bloodlike redness from vegetables. Nature herself is wise, and turns all the waters of vegetables to a lemon colour, and after that into an oil which is very red like blood. The reason why this is so slowly accomplished arises from the too great haste of the ignorant operators who distil it, which causes the greenness to be consumed. They have not learnt to strengthen Nature with their own powers, which is the mode whereby that noble green colour ought to be rectified into redness of itself. An example of this is white wine digesting itself into a lemon colour; and in process of time the green colour of the grape is of itself turned into the red which underlies the coerulean. The

greenness therefore of the vegetables and minerals being lost by the incapacity of the operators, the essence also and spirit of the oil and of the balsam, which is noblest among arcana, will also perish.

CHAPTER XIII.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTION CONCERNING THE PROCESS OF VITRIOL FOR THE RED TINCTURE.

Vitriol contains within itself many muddy and viscous imperfections. Therefore its greenness[13] must be often extracted with water, and rectified until it puts off all the impurities of earth. When all these rectifications are finished, take care above all that the matter shall not be exposed to the sun, for this turns its greenness pale, and at the same time absorbs the arcanum. Let it be kept covered up in a warm stove so that no dust may defile it. Afterwards let it be digested in a closed glass vessel for the space of several months, or until different colours and deep redness shew themselves. Still you must not suppose that by this process the redness is sufficiently fixed. It must, in addition, be cleansed from the interior and accidental defilements of the earth, in the following manner: – It must be rectified with acetum until the earthy defilement is altogether removed, and the dregs are taken away. This is now the true and best rectification of its tincture, from which the blessed oil is to be extracted. From this tincture, which is carefully enclosed in a glass vessel, an alembic afterwards placed on it and luted so that no spirit may escape, the spirit of this oil must be extracted by distillation over a mild and slow fire. This oil is much pleasanter and sweeter than any aromatic balsam of the drugsellers, being entirely free from all acridity[14]. There will subside in tha bottom of the cucurbite some very white earth, shining and glittering like snow. This keep, and protect from all dust. This same earth is altogether separated from its redness.

Thereupon follows the greatest arcanum, that is to say, the Supercelestial Marriage of the Soul, consummately prepared and washed by the blood of the lamb, with its own splendid, shining, and purified body. This is the true supercelestial marriage by which life is prolonged to the last and predestined day. In this way, then, the soul and spirit of the Vitriol, which are its blood, are joined with its purified body, that they may be for eternity inseparable. Take, therefore, this our foliated earth in a glass phial. Into it pour gradually its own oil. The body will receive and embrace its soul; since the body is affected with extreme desire for the soul, and the soul is most perfectly delighted with the embrace of the body. Place this conjunction in a furnace of arcana, and keep it there for forty days. When these have expired you will have a most absolute oil of wondrous perfection, in which Mercury and any other of the imperfect metals are turned into gold.

Now let us turn our attention to its multiplication. Take the corporal Mercury, in the proportion of two parts; pour it over three parts, equal in weight, of the aforesaid oil, and let them remain together for forty days. By this proportion of weight and this order the multiplication becomes infinite.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONCERNING THE SECRETS AND ARCANA OF ANTIMONY, FOR THE RED TINCTURE, WITH A VIEW TO TRANSMUTATION.

Antimony is the true bath of gold. Philosophers call it the examiner and the stilanx. Poets say that in this bath Vulcan washed Phoebus, and purified him from all dirt and imperfection. It is produced from the purest and noblest Mercury and Sulphur, under the genus of vitriol, in metallic form and brightness. Some philosophers call it the White Lead of the Wise Men, or simply the Lead. Take, therefore, of Antimony, the very best of its kind, as much as you will. Dissolve this in its own aquafortis, and throw it into cold water, adding a little of the crocus of Mars, so that it may sink to the bottom of the vessel as a sediment, for otherwise it does not throw off its dregs. After it has been dissolved in this way it will have acquired supreme beauty. Let it be placed in a glass vessel, closely fastened on all sides with a very thick lute, or else in a stone bocia, and mix with it some calcined tutia, sublimated to the perfect degree of fire. It must be carefully guarded from liquefying, because with too great heat it breaks the glass. From one pound of this Antimony a sublimation is made, perfected for a space of two days. Place this sublimated substance in a phial that it may touch the water with its third part, in a luted vessel, so that the spirit may not escape. Let it be suspended over the tripod of arcana, and let the work be urged on at first with a slow fire equal to the sun's heat at midsummer. Then at length on the tenth day let it be gradually increased. For with too great heat the glass vessels are broken, and sometimes even the furnace goes to pieces. While the vapour is ascending different colours appear. Let the fire be moderated until a red matter is seen. Afterwards dissolve in very sharp Acetum, and throw away the dregs. Let the Acetum be abstracted and let it be again dissolved in common distilled water. This again must be abstracted, and the sediment distilled with a very strong fire in a glass vessel closely shut. The whole body of the Antimony will ascend as a very red oil, like the colour of a ruby, and will flow into the receiver, drop by drop, with a most fragrant smell and a very sweet taste[15]. This is the supreme arcanum of the philosophers in Antimony, which they account most highly among the arcana of oils. Then, lastly, let the oil of Sol be made in the following way: – Take of the purest Sol as much as you will, and dissolve it in rectified spirit of wine. Let the spirit be abstracted several times, and an equal number of times let it be dissolved again. Let the last solution be kept with the spirit of wine, and circulated for a month. Afterwards let the volatile gold and the spirit of wine be distilled three or four times by means of an alembic, so that it may flow down into the receiver and be brought to its supreme essence. To half an ounce of this dissolved gold let one ounce of the Oil of Antimony be added. This oil embraces it in the heat of the bath, so that it does not easily let it go, even if the spirit of wine be extracted. In this way you will have the supreme mystery and arcanum of Nature, to which scarcely any equal can be assigned in the nature of things. Let these two oils in combination be shut up together in a phial after the manner described, hung on a tripod for a philosophical month, and warmed with a very gentle fire; although, if the fire be regulated in dire proportion this operation is concluded in thirty-one days, and brought to perfection. By this, Mercury and any other imperfect metals acquire the perfection of gold.

CHAPTER XV.

CONCERNING THE PROJECTION TO BE MADE BY THE MYSTERY AND ARCANUM OF ANTIMONY.

No precise weight can be assigned in this work of projection, though the tincture itself may be extracted from a certain subject, in a defined proportion, and with fitting appliances. For instance, that Medicine tinges sometimes thirty, forty, occasionally even sixty, eighty, or a hundred parts of the imperfect metal. So, then, the whole business hinges chiefly on the purification of the Medicine and the industry of the operator, and, next, on the greater; or lesser cleanliness and purity of the imperfect body taken in hand. For instance, one Venus is more pure than another; and hence it happens that no one fixed weight can be specified in projection. This alone is worth noting, that if the operator happens to have taken too much of the tincture, he can correct this mistake by adding more of the imperfect metal. But if there be too much of the subject, so that the powers of the tincture are weakened, this error is easily remedied by a cineritium, or by cementations, or by ablutions in crude Antimony. There is nothing at this stage which need delay the operator; only let him put before himself a fact which has been passed over by the philosophers, and by some studiously veiled, namely, that in projections there must be a revivification, that is to say, an animation of imperfect bodies – nay, so to speak, a spiritualisation; concerning which some have said that their metals are no common ones, since they live and have a soul.

ANIMATION IS PRODUCED IN THE FOLLOWING WAY.

Take of Venus, wrought into small plates, as much as you will, ten, twenty, or forty pounds. Let these be incrusted with a pulse made of arsenic and calcined tartar, and calcined in their own vessel for twenty-four hours. Then at length let the Venus be pulverised, washed, and thoroughly purified. Let the calcination with ablution be repeated three or four times. In this way it is purged and purified from its thick greenness and from its own impure sulphur. You will have to be on your guard against calcinations made with common sulphur. For whatever is good in the metal is spoilt thereby, and what is bad becomes worse. To ten marks of this purged Venus add one of pure Luna. But in order that the work of the Medicine may be accelerated by projection, and may more easily penetrate the imperfect body, and drive out all portions which are opposed to the nature of Luna, this is accomplished by means of a perfect ferment. For the work is defiled by means of an impure Sulphur, so that a cloud is stretched out over the surface of the transmuted substance, or the metal is mixed with the loppings of the Sulphur and may be cast away therewith. But if a projection of a red stone is to be made, with a view to a red transmutation, it must first fall on gold, afterwards on silver, or on some other metal thoroughly purified, as we have directed above. From thence arises the most perfect gold.

CHAPTER XVI.

CONCERNING THE UNIVERSAL MATTER OF THE PHILOSOPHERS' STONE.

After the mortification of vegetables, they are transmuted, by the concurrence of two minerals, such as Sulphur and Salt, into a mineral nature, so that at length they themselves become perfect minerals. So it is that in the mineral burrows and caves of the earth, vegetables are found which, in the long succession of time, and by the continuous heat of sulphur, put off the vegetable nature and assume that of the mineral. This happens, for the most part, where the appropriate nutriment is taken away from vegetables of this kind, so that they are afterwards compelled to derive their nourishment from the sulphur and salts of the earth, until what was before vegetable passes over into a perfect mineral. From this mineral state, too, sometimes a perfect metallic essence arises, and this happens by the progress of one degree into another.

But let us return to the Philosophers' Stone. The matter of this, as certain writers have mentioned, is above all else difficult to discover and abstruse to understand. The method and most certain rule for finding out this, as well as other subjects – what they embrace or are able to effect – is a careful examination of the root and seed by which they come to our knowledge. For this, before all things else, a consideration of principles is absolutely necessary; and also of the manner in which Nature proceeds from imperfection to the end of perfection. Now, for this consideration it is well to have it thoroughly understood from the first that all things created by Nature consist of three primal elements, namely, natural Mercury, Sulphur, and Salt in combination, so that in some substances they are volatile, in others fixed. Wherever corporal Salt is mixed with spiritual Mercury and animated Sulphur into one body, then Nature begins to work, in those subterranean places which serve for her vessels, by means of a separating fire. By this the thick and impure Sulphur is separated from the pure, the earth is segregated from the Salt, and the clouds from the Mercury, while those purer parts are preserved, which Nature again welds together into a pure geogamic body. This operation is esteemed by the Magi as a mixture and conjunction by the uniting of three constituents, body, soul, and spirit. When this union is completed there results from it a pure Mercury. Now if this, when flowing down through its subterranean passages and veins, meets with a chaotic Sulphur, the Mercury is coagulated by it according to the condition of the Sulphur. It is, however, still volatile, so that scarcely in a hundred years is it transformed into a metal. Hence arose the vulgar idea that Mercury and Sulphur are the matter of the metals, as is certainly reported by miners. It is not, however, common Mercury and common Sulphur which are the matter of the metals, but the Mercury and the Sulphur of the philosophers are incorporated and inborn in perfect metals, and in the forms of them, so that they never fly from the fire, nor are they depraved by the force of the corruption caused by the elements. It is true that by the dissolution of this natural mixture our Mercury is subdued, as all the philosophers say. Under this form of words our Mercury comes to be drawn from perfect bodies and from the forces of the earthly planets. This is what Hermes asserts in the following terms: "The Sun and the Moon are the roots of this Art". The Son of Hamuel says that the Stone of the philosophers is water coagulated, namely, in Sol and Luna. From this it is clearer than the sun that the material of the Stone is nothing else but Sol and Luna. This is confirmed by the fact that like produces like. We know that there are only two Stones, the

white and the red. There are also two matters of the Stone, Sol and Luna, formed together in a proper marriage, both natural and artificial. Now, as we see that the man or the woman, without the seed of both, cannot generate, in the same way our man, Sol, and his wife, Luna, cannot conceive or do an thing in the way of generation, without the seed and sperm of both. Hence the philosophers gathered that a third thing was necessary, namely, the animated seed of both, the man and the woman, without which they judged that the whole of their work was fruitless and in vain. Such a sperm is Mercury, which, by the natural conjunction of both bodies Sol and Luna, receives their nature into itself in union. Then at length, and not before, the work is fit for congress, ingress, and generation; by the masculine and feminine power and virtue. Hence the philosophers have said that this same Mercury is composed of body, spirit, and soul, and that it has assumed the nature and property of all elements. Therefore, with their most powerful genius and intellect, they asserted their Stone to be animal. They even called it their Adam, who carries his own invisible Eve hidden in his body, from that moment in which they were united by the power of the Supreme God, the Maker of all creatures. For this reason it may be said that the Mercury of the Philosophers is none other than their most abstruse, compounded Mercury, and not the common Mercury. So then they have wisely said to the sages that there is in Mercury whatever wise men seek. Almadir, the philosopher, says: "We extract our Mercury from one perfect body and two perfect natural conditions incorporated together, which indeed puts forth externally its perfection, whereby it is able to resist the fire, so that its internal imperfection may be protected by the external perfections". By this passage of the sagacious philosopher is understood the Adamic matter, the limbus of the microcosm[16], and the homogeneous, unique matter of the philosophers. The sayings of these men, which we have before mentioned, are simply golden, and ever to be held in the highest esteem, because they contain nothing superfluous or without force. Summarily, then, the matter of the Philosophers' Stone is none other than a fiery and perfect Mercury extracted by Nature and Art; that is, the artificially prepared and true hermaphrodite Adam, and the microcosm: That wisest of the philosophers, Mercurius, making the same statement, called the Stone an orphan. Our Mercury, therefore, is the same which contains in itself all the perfections, force, and virtues of the Sun, which also runs through all the streets and houses of all the planets, and in its own rebirth has acquired the force of things above and things below; to the marriage of which it is to be compared, as is clear from the whiteness and the redness combined in it.

CHAPTER XVII.

CONCERNING THE PREPARATION OF THE MATTER FOR THE PHILOSOPHIC STONE.

What Nature principally requires is that its own philosophic man should be brought into a mercurial substance, so that it may be born into the philosophic Stone. Moreover, it should be remarked that those common preparations of Geber, Albertus Magnus, Thomas Aquinas, Rupescissa, Polydorus, and such men, are nothing more than some particular solutions, sublimations, and calcinations, having no reference to our universal substance, which needs

only the most secret fire of the philosophers. Let the fire and Azoth therefore suffice for you. From the fact that the philosophers make mention of certain preparations, such as putrefaction, distillation, sublimation, calcination, coagulation, dealbation, rubification, ceration, fixation, and the like, you should understand that in their universal substance, Nature herself fulfils all the operations in the matter spoken of, and not the operator, only in a philosophical vessel, and with a similar fire, but not common fire. The white and the red spring from one root without any intermediary. It is dissolved by itself, it copulates by itself, grows white, grows red, is made crocus-coloured and black by itself, marries itself and conceives in itself. It is therefore to be decocted, to be baked, to be fused; it ascends, and it descends. All these operations are a single operation and produced by the fire alone. Still, some philosophers, nevertheless, have, by a highly graduated essence of wine, dissolved the body of Sol, and rendered it volatile, so that it should ascend through an alembic, thinking that this is the true volatile matter of the philosophers, though it is not so. And although it be no contemptible arcanum to reduce this perfect metallic body into a volatile, spiritual substance, yet they are wrong in their separation of the elements. This process of the monks, such as Lully, Richard of England, Rupescissa, and the rest, is erroneous. By this process they thought that they were going to separate gold after this fashion into a subtle, spiritual, and elementary power, each by itself, and afterwards by circulation and rectification to combine them again in one – but in vain. For although one element may, in a certain sense, be separated from another, yet, nevertheless, every element separated in this way can again be separated into another element, but these elements cannot afterwards by circulation in a pelican, or by distillation, be again brought back into one; but they always remain a certain volatile matter, and aurum potabile, as they themselves call it. The reason why they could not compass their intention is that Nature refuses to be in this way dragged asunder and separated by man's disjunctions, as by earthly glasses and instruments. She alone knows her own operations and the weights of the elements, the separations, rectifications, and copulations of which she brings about without the aid of any operator or manual artifice, provided only the matter be contained in the secret fire and in its proper occult vessel. The separation of the elements, therefore, is impossible by man. It may appear to take place, but it is not true, whatever may be said by Raymond Lully, and of that famous English golden work which he is falsely supposed to have accomplished. Nature herself has within herself the proper separator, who again joins together what he has put asunder, without the aid of man. She knows best the proportion of every element, which man does not know, however miseading writers romance in their frivolous and false recipes about this volatile gold.

This is the opinion of the philosophers, that when they have put their matter into the more secret fire, and when with a moderated philosophical heat it is cherished on every side, beginning to pass into corruption, it grows black. This operation they term putrefaction, and they call the blackness by the name of the Crow's Head. The ascent and descent thereof they term distillation, ascension, and descension. The exsiccation they call coagulation; and the dealbation they call calcination; while because it becomes fluid and soft in the heat they make mention of ceration. When it ceases to ascend and remains liquid at the bottom, they say fixation is present.

In this manner it is the terms of philosophical operations are to bc understood, and not otherwise.

CHAPTER XVIII.

CONCERNING INSTRUMENTS AND THE PHILOSOPHIC VESSEL.

Sham philosophers have misunderstood the occult and secret philosophic vessel, and worse is that which is said by Aristoteles the Alchemist (not the famous Greek Academic Philosopher), giving it out that the matter is to be decocted in a triple vessel. Worst of all is that which is said by another, namely, that the matter in its first separation and first degree requires a metallic vessel; in its second degree of coagulation and dealbation of its earth a glass vessel; and in the third degree, for fixation, an earthen vessel. Nevertheless, hereby the philosophers understand one vessel alone in all the operations up to the perfection of the red stone. Since, then, our matter is our root for the white and the red, necessarily our vessel must be so fashioned that the matter in it may be governed by the heavenly bodies. For invisible celestial influences and the impressions of the stars are in the very first degree necessary for the work: Otherwise it would be impossible for the Oriental, Chaldean, and Egyptian stone to be realised. By this Anaxagoras knew the powers of the whole firmament, and foretold that a great stone would descend from heaven to earth, which actually happened after his death. To the Cabalists our vessel is perfectly well known, because it must be made according to a truly geometrical proportion and measure, and from a definite quadrature of the circle, so that the spirit and the soul of our matter, separated from their body, may be able to raise this vessel with themselves in proportion to the altitude of heaven. If the vessel be wider, narrower, higher, or lower than is fitting, and than the dominating operating spirit and soul desire, the heat of our secret philosophic fire (which is, indeed, very severe), will violently excite the matter and urge it on to excessive operation, so that the vessel is shivered into a thousand pieces, with imminent danger to the body and even the life of the operator. On the other hand, if it be of greater capacity than is required in due proportion for the heat to have effect on the matter, the work will be wasted and thrown away. So, then, our philosophic vessel must be made with the greatest care. What the material of the vessel should be is understood only by those who, in the first solution of our fixed and perfected matter have brought that matter to its own primal quintessence. Enough has been said on this point.

The operator must also very accurately note what, in its first solution, the matter sends forth and rejects from itself.

The method of describing the form of the vessel is difficult. It should be such as Nature requires, and it must be sought out and investigated from every possible source, so that, from the height of the philosophic heaven, elevated above the philosophic earth, it may be able to operate on the fruit of its own earthly body. It should have this form, too, in order that the separation and purification of the elements, when the fire drives one from the other, may be able to be accomplished, and that each may have power to occupy the place to which it adheres; and also that the sun and the other planets may exercise their operations around the

elemental earth, while their course in their circuit is neither hindered nor agitated with too swift a motion. In all these particulars which have been mentioned it must have a proper proportion of rotundity and of height.

The instruments for the first purification of mineral bodies are fusing-vessels, bellows, tongs, capels, cupels, tests, cementatory vessels, cineritiums, cucurbites, bocias for aquafortis and aqua regia; and also the appliances which are required for projection at the climax of the work.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONCERNING THE SECRET FIRE OF THE PHILOSOPHERS.

This is a well-known sententious saying of the philosophers, "Let fire and Azoc suffice thee". Fire alone is the whole work and the entire art. Moreover, they who build their fire and keep their vessel in that heat are in error. In vain some have attempted it with the heat of horse dung. By the coal fire, without a medium, they have sublimated their matter, but they have not dissolved it. Others have got their heat from lamps, asserting that this is the secret fire of the philosophers for making their Stone. Some have placed it in a bath, first of all in heaps of ants' eggs; others in juniper ashes. Some have sought the fire in quicklime, in tartar, vitriol, nitre, etc. Others, again, have sought it in boiling water. Thomas Aquinas speaks falsely of this fire, saying that God and the angels cannot do without this fire, but use it daily. What blasphemy is this! Is it not a manifest lie that God is not able to do without the elemental heat of boiling water? All the heats excited by those means which have been mentioned are utterly useless for our work Take care not to be misled by Arnold de Villa Nova, who has written on the subject of the coal fire, for in this matter he will deceive you.

Almadir says that the invisible rays of our fire of themselves suffice. Another cites, as an illustration, that the heavenly heat by its reflections tends to the coagulation and perfection of Mercury, just as by its continual motion it tends to the generation of metals. Again, says this same authority, "Make a fire, vaporous, digesting, as for cooking, continuous, but not volatile or boiling, enclosed, shut off from the air, not burning, but altering and penetrating. Now, in truth, I have mentioned every mode of fire and of exciting heat. If you are a true philosopher you will understand". This is what he says.

Salmanazar remarks: "Ours is a corrosive fire, which brings over our vessel an air like a cloud, in which cloud the rays of this fire are hidden. If this dew of chaos and this moisture of the cloud fail, a mistake has been committed". Again, Almadir says, that unless the fire has warmed our sun with its moisture, by the excrement of the mountain, with a moderate ascent, we shall not be partakers either of the Red or the White Stone.

All these matters shew quite openly to us the occult fire of the wise men. Finally, this is the matter of our fire, namely, that it be kindled by the quiet spirit of sensible fire, which drives upwards, as it were, the heated chaos from the opposite quarter, and above our philosophic

matter. This heat, glowing above our vessel, must urge it to the motion of a perfect generation, temperately but continuously, without intermission.

CHAPTER XX.

CONCERNING THE FERMENT OF THE PHILOSOPHERS, AND THE WEIGHT.

Philosophers have laboured greatly in the art of ferments and of fermentations, which seems important above all others. With reference thereto some have made a vow to God and to the philosophers that they would never divulge its arcanum by similitudes or by parables.

Nevertheless, Hermes, the father of all philosophers, in the "Book of the Seven Treatises", most clearly discloses the secret of ferments, saying that they consist only of their own paste; and more at length he says that the ferment whitens the confection, hinders combustion, altogether retards the flux of the tincture, consoles bodies, and amplifies unions. He says, also, that this is the key and the end of the work, concluding that the ferment is nothing but paste, as that of the sun is nothing but sun, and that of the moon nothing but moon. Others affirm that the ferment is the soul, and if this be not rightly prepared from the magistery, it effects nothing. Some zealots of this Art seek the Art in common sulphur, arsenic, tutia, auripigment, vitriol, etc., but in vain; since the substance which is sought is the same as that from which it has to be drawn forth. It should be remarked, therefore, that fermentations of this kind do not succeed according to the wishes of the zealots in the way they desire, but, as is clear from what has been said above, simply in the way of natural successes.

But, to come at length to the weight; this must be noted in two ways. The first is natural, the second artificial. The natural attains its result in the earth by Nature and concordance. Of this, Arnold says: If more or less earth than Nature requires be added, the soul is suffocated, and no result is perceived, nor any fixation. It is the same with the water. If more or less of this bc taken it will bring a corresponding loss. A superfluity renders the matter unduly moist, and a deficiency makes it too dry and too hard. If there be over much air present, it is too strongly impressed on the tincture; if there be too little, the body will turn out pallid. In the same way, if the fire be too strong, the matter is burnt up; if it be too slack, it has not the power of drying, nor of dissolving or heating the other elements. In these things elemental heat consists.

Artificial weight is quite occult. It is comprised in the magical art of ponderations. Between the spirit, soul, and body, say the philosophers, weight consists of Sulphur as the director of the work; for the soul strongly desires Sulphur, and necessarily observes it by reason of its weight.

You can understand it thus: Our matter is united to a red fixed Sulphur, to which a third part of the regimen has been entrusted, even to the ultimate degree, so that it may perfect to infinity the operation of the Stone, may remain therewith together with its fire, and may consist of a weight equal to the matter itself, in and through all, without variation of any degree. Therefore, after the matter has been adapted and mixed in its proportionate weight, it

should be closely shut up with its seal in the vessel of the philosophers, and committed to the secret fire. In this the Philosophic Sun will rise and surge up, and will illuminate all things that have been looking for his light, expecting it with highest hope.

In these few words we will conclude the arcanum of the Stone, an arcanum which is in no way maimed or defective, for which we give God undying thanks. Now have we opened to you our treasure, which is not to be paid for by the riches of the whole world.

Petrus Bonus - A form and method of perfecting base metals

Some of the principles of our Art are apprehended mentally or intellectually, such as Chaos, Alteration, Power, Operation, Generation, and Digestion. Others are perceived by the senses, as wine, or the First Matter, body or form, elements, the perfect being, the forming ferment, colours, fermentation, separation. Some are apprehended both by mind and sense, e.g., Sky, or Heaven.

A. From CHAOS goes forth an intelligent Master, who, amidst the rude, confused, and undigested mass of the elements, perceives himself advancing towards M or Q, until by B, C, D, and by the primordial elements, which follow from Nature herself, he arrives thither.

B. The SUBSTANCE is that from which D arises when the Artificer works extrinsically. We also apply it. to the imperfect metals which are to be changed into M or Q.

C. The FORM is the intelligent outward influence (the Master), which, sets in motion. these Principles. It is that also which gives being to M or Q, and by which T, S, V, Z are changed into X or Y.

D. The Sky is the female principle, by which that which is received of the male is nourished and increased until it is wholly changed into M or Q.

E. The ELEMENTS are changed from B into D, and by way of C, on the other hand, F, G, H, I, are intermingled.

F. CONVERSION takes place, first of C into D, and then of D into C, finally of both in turn into M or Q. F also indicates the potency of which D is the Act, and through which pearls are made and generated artificially.

G. PERMIXTION is the union of the male and the female principle (e.g. C with D).

H. DISSOLUTION is the hermaphroditic conception which takes place in either C or D.

I. GENERATION is partly that by which C and D produce M, and partly that by which M and D produce Q. If we place the Substance in a closed vessel, it is brought about by Nature rather than by the aid of art.

K. Of COLOURS, the first is black, which is more difficult to bring about than the rest, from the fact that it is the first. It shews that C and D have united, and that conception has taken place, i.e. that M or Q will ultimately be produced. Then comes white, by which we gradually progress from C to M, and thence to Q; then saffron, which indicates that the conjunction of the substances is in progress, because the seed is diffused through the whole of D; the fourth colour is red, indicating the actual accomplishment of M or Q.

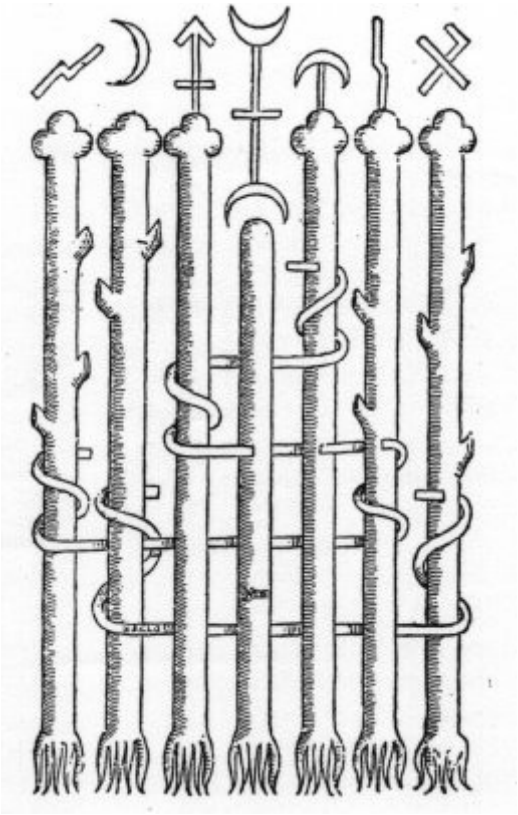
L. DIGESTION is the gradual development of that which is conceived, by gentle outward heat, e.g., the evolution of M out of C and D, or of Q out of M and D.

O. SEPARATION is the severing of elements, which, originating from B and D, are also separated from the same.
P. OPERATION is either the whole process of change by which B and the rest of the principles become M or Q, or the use of M and Q in transmuting base metals into silver or gold.
M. The PERFECT BEING is the efficient cause, or the form of that into which C and D are changed by way of E, F, G, H, I, K, L, O, P, and has power to perfect imperfect metals.
N. FERMENTATION is the wonderful principle by which M is developed into Q. It is brought about by the bland warmth of a gentle fire. Thus M is still wanting in some of the most potent properties of Q, which is the perfect Tincture. Q is capable of unlimited extension, not only quantitatively, but qualitatively. If you can change M into Q, you can multiply and perfect Q indefinitely.
Q. Then, is the formative tincture, consummately perfect, and consisting of the equilibrium of all the elements. Hence its virtue is far greater and more potent than that of M. It changes imperfect metals into silver or gold (X or Y), and it is an efficacious remedy for all mental and bodily disease in man, seeing that it expels all disturbing elements; it also makes and keeps men good and kindly disposed towards others. It is, finally, a sovereign cure of the weakness of old age.
Mix one part of gold (X) with twelve parts of Our Water; pound them small; place them in a moderately deep jar ; set over it an alembic in the ordinary way; stop up the jar and the apertures of the alembic, up to the beak, with clay; let it dry thoroughly; place it on the oven (not immediately over the coals, but on the iron) in such a way that the whole jar shall be covered by it as far as the alembic, and let the aperture between jar and furnace be also sealed with clay. Then light the fire, and there will come oil into the alembic, together with the water, and will float on the water with an orange colour. Continue the fire till all the water is distilled; let it cool; remove the recipient; separate the oil from the water, and open the jar: you will find a hard, brittle, and pulverisable body. If you like, repeat the whole process, pouring the same or other water over the body; distil as before. The water that comes out will not be so much as at first, and if you repeat the process a third time, there will be hardly any water at all. The body that remains will be a blackish powder, which you calcine in the following way:
If the body be one ounce, pour over it three ounces of Mercury, and pound them together, thus producing an amalgam like butter. Then place it in a glass vessel, and stop up the apertures with clay on the outer side. Set it on a trivet over a gentle fire of three or four coals, stirring it all the time with a small wooden rod, and be careful to shut your mouth and nose, because the fumes are destructive to the teeth. Continue to stir till all the Mercury has disappeared, and there remains a subtle body of more intense blackness. Repeat this even to the third time, till the body is pulverised and intensely black. Then take it, place it in a smaller vessel, and pour on it as much of the aforesaid oil as will moisten it; close the vessel, and let it stand over a lamp; in three days the body will be dried, and it will begin to assume a whitish appearance. Pour on more oil as before; dry by the same fire, and the substance will exhibit an increased whiteness. Repeat the process up to the fourth time; the substance will then have turned of a dazzling whiteness, delicate as an orient pearl of the purest water. Then proceed with our ore, salt, and gum, which must become one. A gentle fire can do no harm,

but the warmth of horsedung is better.
The blackness of the substance, when it appears, is not the blackness of ink, but a bright ebony colour. When it has been changed into whiteness, we must then look out for the appearance of the saffron hue, which will in no long time be followed by a most glorious ruby colour. Between the appearance of M (the white colour) and Q (the ruby colour) there should be an interval of thirty days, during which the heat of the fire should be slightly increased, and the vessel kept carefully closed. The substance will then be perfect, and you should carefully preserve it for your own use and that of your friends. One part of it will transmute 2,000 parts of any base metal into its own glorious nature.
To change one drachm of M into Q, add to it three ounces of D and one ounce of C. Subject the whole to gentle coction for thirty days, till it passes through K, after which you will behold perfect. Q, round and red. When you have performed and accomplished all this, you may consider yourself as a great master; and you should render to the great and good God fervent and constant thanks for His unspeakable benefit. Thus I have bestowed upon you a gift, gentle reader, the vast value of which will be understood by generations to come.

S = lead. X = gold.
T = tin. Y = silver.
V = iron. Z = bronze.

Figures representing these seven metals



We have drawn the composition of the trees of the grove together; we will now describe their natures one by one, according to the best of our ability. We will, in the first place, begin with those trees upon the left, the scrolls whereof simply encircle the bark, and with their purgation as follows :-

The first tree is hot, dry, red, like red-hot bronze. It becomes moist, dry, and black, like lead; cold and humid, like quicksilver; hot, humid, and saffron-coloured.

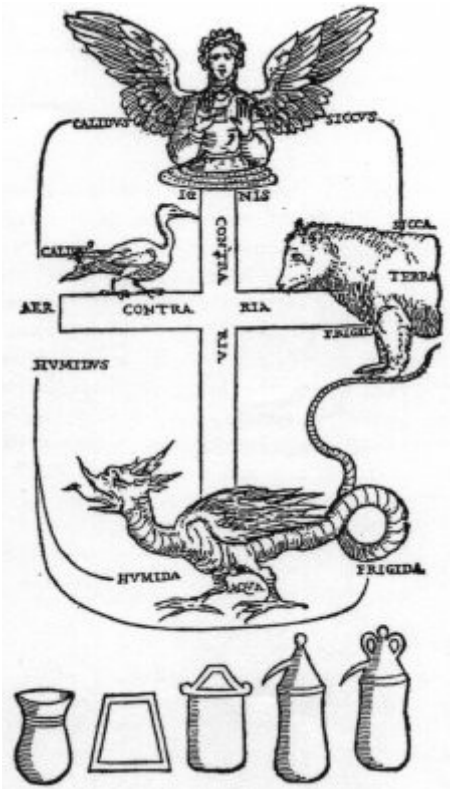
The second tree is hot and dry, like glowing brass; it becomes humid and black, like quicksilver; dry and white, like lead; hot, humid, and saffron-coloured, like blood-red gold.

The third tree is hot, dry, and red. It becomes dry and black, like lead; humid and white, like tin or quicksilver; hot, humid, and saffron, like blood-red gold.

The first tree on the right-hand side has a scroll which enters the front and comes out on the other side; it is hot, humid, and saffron-coloured, like red-hot gold. It becomes dry and black, like earthy silver; humid, like silver; hot, dry, and red, like red-hot bronze.

The second tree, which is pierced by its scroll, is dry and red, like red-hot bronze. It becomes dry and black, like lead; humid and white, like quicksilver; hot, humid, and saffron-coloured, like blood-red gold.

The third tree, which is pierced by its scroll, is hot, dry, and red, like red-hot bronze. It becomes dry and black, like lead; humid and white like tin; hot, humid, saffron-coloured, and of a bloody red.



Exposition of the typical figures.

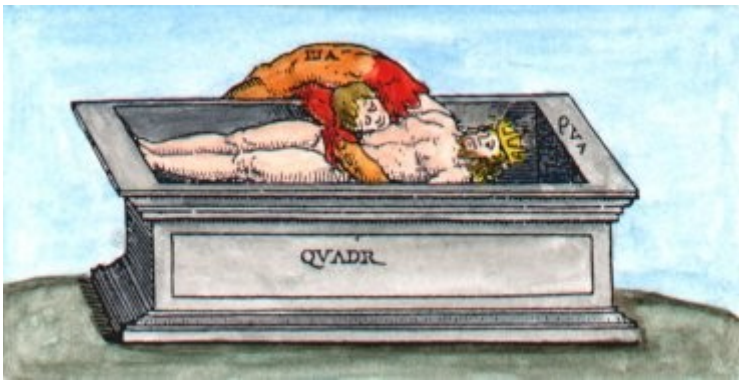
Three rules must be carefully observed in our art : first prepare the right substance; then carry on the work continuously, so that it may not be marred by interruption; thirdly, be patient, and follow always in the footsteps of Nature.
Get (as your substance) highly purified Water of Life, and keep it; but do not suppose that the liquid which moistens all things, is the bright and limpid liquid of Bacchus. For while you anxiously look about in out-of-the-way places for extraordinary events, you pass by the sparkling waves of the blessed stream.

Enter the Palace in which are fifteen mansions, where the king, his brow circled with the diadem, sits on a lofty throne, holding in his hand the sceptre of the whole world before him, his son and five servants kneel in robes of different colours, imploring him to bestow upon his son and his servants a share of his power; but he does not even reply to their request.

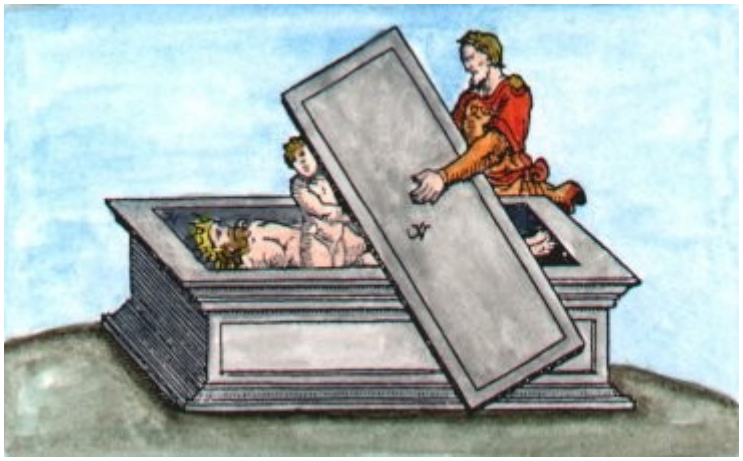
The son, incited by the servants, stabs the father as he sits on the throne. (Let an amalgam be made with highly purified water, etc.)

In the third picture we see the son catching his father's blood in his robe (which is the second process of our art, already explained in the method).

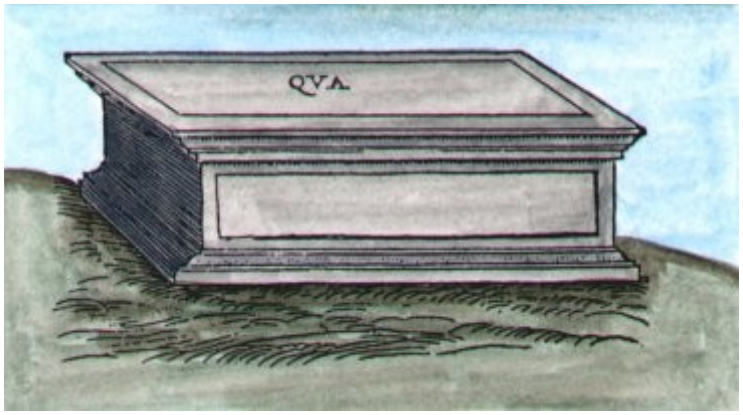
A grave is dug in the fourth mansion (which is the furnace). Its depth is two hand-breadths, and its width four inches.



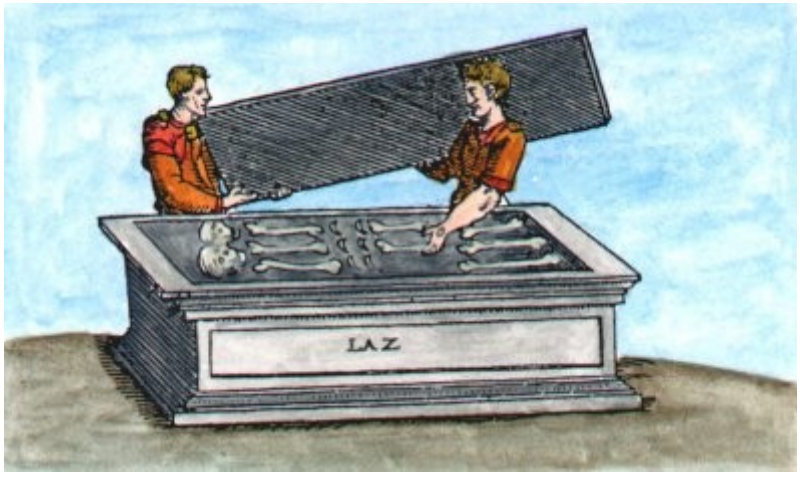
In the fifth mansion the son thought to throw his father into the grave, and to leave him there ; but (by means of our art) both fell in together.



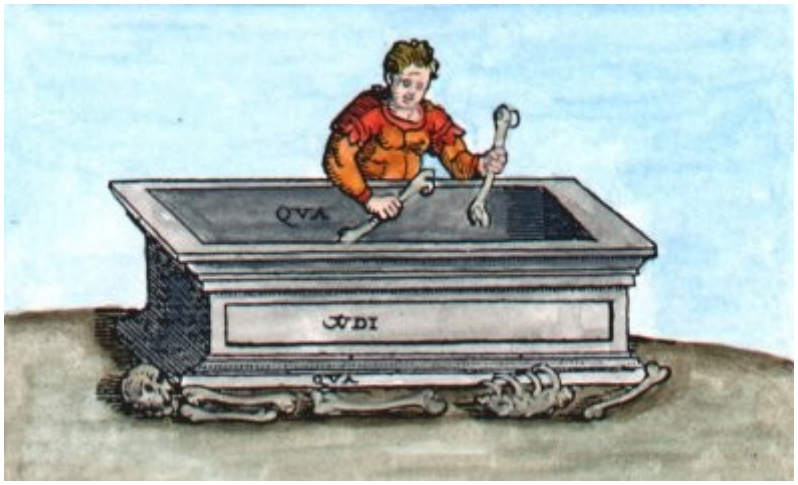
The sixth mansion is that in which the son still strives to get out, but one (who sprang from them in the second operation) comes, and prevents him from so doing.



While the father and son are in the tomb, which is called the seventh mansion, there follows putrefaction in their ashes, or a very hot bath.



In the eighth mansion, that which happened during the putrefaction is inspected, the vase having become cold, etc.



In the ninth mansion the bones are taken from the tomb. This happens when the whole body has been dissolved by successive solution, which, being done, keep it carefully.

In the tenth mansion, the bones are divided into nine parts, the dissolved substance being subjected to gentle coction for nine days, till a portion of it turns black. Remove this latter, and keep it in another vessel in a hot place. Subject the water to gentle heat for another nine days. Again remove that which has turned black, and put it with the rest. Continue the operation till the water is clear and pure. Let its Water of Iife be poured over the black substance in a small glass vessel, so that it shall float over it to the height of an inch, and let it stand nine days over a gentle fire, renewing the water every day, if necessary. (Thus the earth will become clear and white, according to the teaching of the philosophers ; for this earth is putrefied and purified with its water.)
An angel is sent, who casts the bones on the purified and whitened earth (which is now mixed with its seed, and let the whole be placed in a closed jar with its alembic. Let the thicker substance be divided from the water by a more violent fire, and remain. as a hard substance at the bottom.)

In the eleventh mansion the servants pray God to restore their king. Henceforth the whole work is concerned with his restoration.

For this purpose a second angel is sent in the twelfth mansion, who places the other part of those bones on the earth (till they are all thickened : then a wonderful thing happens). Thus, a succession of angels is sent, who cast the first, second, third, and fourth part of the bones on the earth, where they become white, transparent; and firm. The fifth and sixth parts are changed into yellow, and so also with the seventh, eighth, and ninth; the earth of the bones becomes as red as blood or rubies.

Then the king rises from the tomb, full of the grace of God. His body is now all spiritual and heavenly, and he has power to make all his servants kings.

At last he exercises his power upon his servants and his son, placing crowns of gold upon their heads, and making them kings by his grace, since God had given him great power and majesty.

Let no impostor, greedy or wicked person, touch this glorious work with his unclean hands. Let the honest man and him of a wise heart come hither, and him who is capable of exploring the most hidden causes of things.